Executive Summary

In September 2018, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) held a joint workshop in Tanzania. The purpose of which was to bring together researchers and stakeholders from the Global South to identify:

- What constitutes best practice in research partnerships
- How to engage researchers and governments from the Global South in research programme agenda setting
- How to translate research outputs into development impact

Through a series of presentations, breakout sessions and a panel discussion the attendees identified a number of recommendations for how research funders could support and promote equitable partnerships and research translation. The key messages are highlighted below.

Engaging stakeholders from the Global South in the development of North – South research programme is important to ensure that the programmes address the priorities of developing countries. Funders could engage stakeholders from the Global South more effectively in the development of programmes by:

- Using a participatory process to involve stakeholders from the Global South in co-designing the research programme agenda
- Establishing local advisory networks
- Developing a greater understanding of national/regional priorities
- Providing support for national/regional priority setting
- Launching broad calls and providing support for applicants from the Global South to develop proposals
- Using a range of tools, technologies and resources to engage stakeholders from the Global South in dynamic and wide ranging consultations about priority setting.

Researchers in the Global South face a number of challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of core institutional funding for research, lack of resources, lack of mentors and lack of local funding opportunities. North - South research partnerships could address some of these challenges by:

- Providing support for countries to develop research priorities that align with their national development agendas
- Providing support to strengthen institutions and research governance systems and access to infrastructure and equipment.
- Supporting research capacity strengthening

Funders could do more to support and enable equitable North – South Research partnerships, throughout the funding cycle. For example:

- During the application process, funders could provide guidance to applicants on the expectation of equitable partnerships, proactively support partnership development and work to make the application process more accessible to applicants from the Global South.
- Funders could include evaluation of the equitability of the partnership and the impact of the research in the Global South in the assessment process. Funders could also
put mechanisms in place to ensure that applicants from the Global South are involved in all aspects of the assessment process and work to strengthen their capacity in the peer review process.

- During the lifetime of the project, funders could continue to actively support the partnership and work to reduce the burden of their financial and administrative processes on the Global South. Funders could also provide mechanisms to enable researchers from the Global South to engage directly with them and their systems. Funders could also provide support for continued capacity strengthening in the Global South.
- After the project is completed funders could provide support for impact and evaluation activities and links to follow on funding.

There are a number of challenges and barriers to translating research outputs into policy and practice including institutional factors such as a lack of investment, difficulty engaging and getting the buy-in of policymakers, lack of capacity for research translation and limited resources. To support and enable the translation of research outputs into policy and practice funders could:

- Work to create an enabling and supportive environment for translating research outputs into policy and practice
- Seek evidence that the project is relevant to national priorities and that there is local buy-in and support to enhance the likelihood of the uptake of the research outputs
- Dedicate a component of the application and assessment process to the description and assessment of the uptake of research outputs into policy and practice.
- Support capacity strengthening for research translation for both researchers and policy makers

**Conclusion**

The workshop report provides a framework for funders to develop good practice in supporting equitable research partnerships and maximise impact through North–South research funding programmes and offers funders a valuable lens through which to review their existing funding processes.

UKRI is committed to using the recommendations detailed in this report to identify opportunities to further embed the principles of equitable research partnerships in its research programmes.
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Introduction

In September 2018, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) held a joint workshop in Tanzania. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together researchers and stakeholders to identify:

- What constitutes best practice in research partnerships
- How to engage researchers and governments from the Global South in research programme agenda setting
- How to translate research outputs into development impact

Prior to attending the workshop the attendees were asked to complete an anonymous survey about their experiences of applying for funding, working in research partnerships and translating research outputs into policy and practice. The survey was completed by 14 individuals.

The workshop was attended by approximately 40 researchers and stakeholders from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Researchers were invited to attend if they had received funding through either the Swiss Research for Development programme or the Global Challenge Research Fund. However, the survey revealed those attending also had experience of applying to a range of research calls from other agencies based in the Global North such as the International Development Research Centre, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, National Institutes of Health and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. The list of attendees is available in annex 1.

The two day workshop included a mixture of presentations, breakout sessions and a panel discussion. The workshop agenda is available in annex 2.

The meeting report synthesises information from the survey responses, presentations, the panel discussion and the participant’s discussions during the breakout sessions and presents information about the challenges and barriers faced by researchers in the Global South1 and a number of recommendation for funders.

Effective North – South Research Programmes

In response to the survey, 83% of researchers indicated that the last three calls that they had applied to from international funding agencies were highly relevant to the priorities of their countries, 17% said that the calls had partial or little relevance.

The attendees agreed that an effective North-South research programme delivers impact in the Global South as its primary objective, has a clear plan to deliver impact and implementable ideas, addresses the priorities of the Global South by aligning with national development plans etc, takes into account the local political context and limitations to research uptake and policy implementation and meets local needs.

Locally led priority setting helps to align and produce research that is relevant, acceptable and has impact. Therefore the development of research programmes should involve consultation with beneficiaries to identify their needs.

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1 In this report the term ‘Global South’ is used to refer to countries on the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients and the term ‘Global North’ is used to refer to high income countries.
There was a recognition that there are gaps in national/regional priority setting and that funders could play a role in providing support to actors from the Global South to set up priorities such as supporting foresight type analyses.

Recommendations for funders

The attendees made the following recommendations for how funders could more effectively engage local stakeholders in the development of research programme agendas.

Co-design the research programmes through a participatory process
- Engage with stakeholders at all levels in the research policy process including local communities, civil society, researchers, development agencies and policy makers through workshops, conferences, umbrella organisation such as African Academies of Science (AAS) or existing societies and membership organisations to connect to broader networks.

Establish local advisory networks
- Create an independent African funding advisory board
- Create forums to engage and establish partnerships with researchers, local funders, policy makers, politicians, regulatory and oversight bodies.
- Identify game changers and champions at different levels of research and different parts of the research value chain to identify research priorities.

Develop a greater understanding of national/regional priorities
- Commission a systematic review of national, regional and global research priorities/agendas/development plans, visions and other types of published literature/evidence to synthesise current knowledge, identify local priorities and research gaps and determine the type and level of intervention required

Provide support for national/regional priority setting
- Support actors from the Global South to address gaps in national/regional priority setting through mechanisms such as supporting foresight type analyses. Provide funding for institutional capacity strengthening to enable institutions to develop a long term vision. Support statistical gathering in R&D system performance to enable local actors to calibrate the state of R&D.

Launch broad calls and provide support for application development
- Use a flexible approach to research programming such as running broad calls for research that allow research groups to put forward a strong case for key priority areas. Provide resources such as pump-priming grants, or seed funding, to enable scoping exercises in the Global South, prior to the submission of larger research proposals, to identify priorities and ensure alignment with local, regional and/or national priorities.

Use a range of tools, technologies and resources to engage stakeholders in the Global South in dynamic and wide ranging consultations about priority setting.
- Ideas include using online platforms for regular exchange and feedback between different stakeholders including researchers and the public. Using informal network groups via social media platforms to showcase existing initiatives and bring/capture more attention and generate discussion about future priorities. Creating databases of African national and institutional research strategies and policies; African policy makers; leading African researchers.
Addressing Research Challenges Through North - South Research Partnerships

Through the survey, the participants identified that researchers in their institutions face a number of challenges. The most frequently identified were poor infrastructure, lack of core institutional funding for research, lack of resources, lack of mentors and lack of local funding opportunities. When asked which of these challenges could be addressed through North – South research partnerships, access to mentors and resources were identified as particular priorities.

During the workshop the participants were asked to expand on how North – South research partnerships could address these challenges.

Recommendations for funders

Provide support for countries to develop research priorities that align with their national development agendas by:

- funding foresight type analyses to identify priorities
- Creating opportunities for interfaces and influence between researchers and respective governments.
- Encouraging Global South governments to appreciate and support /invest in research in important priority areas

Provide support to strengthen institutions, research governance, infrastructure and equipment.

- Funding for research governance systems for example support for initiatives such as the Good Financial Grants Practice or other frameworks.
- Strengthen research infrastructure by integrating infrastructure and programme funding.
- Funding for research equipment including training, operation and maintenance. Use a flexible approach to allow institutions to lease rather than buy equipment and supported costs for training and technical support.
- Develop programmes that couple capacity building in terms of lab infrastructure, technology transfer and access to electronic resources.

Support research capacity strengthening

- Strengthen academic institutions to build a culture of research which will increase research capacity in Global South to address priority issues.
- Support schemes to train personnel in sectors where gaps have been identified such as PhDs and postdoctoral fellowships.
- Support mentoring schemes between the Global North and Global South such as mentoring and coaching, exchanges, visiting research placements and fellowships across the Global South and North, combined joint degree programmes, joint research applications, creating mentoring networks across regions, disciplines and career stages. Online mentorship programmes to allow remote mentoring. Development of programmes that embrace mentorship of young scientists.
Building Equitable North – South Research Partnerships

In the survey respondents identified a number of advantages and disadvantages associated with working in North – South research partnerships. The most common advantages were the formation of peer networks, mutual learning, access to knowledge, access to funding, career development and mentorship. The most common disadvantages were power imbalances in partnerships, researchers in the Global North and South having different priorities and that research agendas were often set by researchers based in the Global North.

In their responses, 19% of the respondents indicated that they had experienced inequitable partnerships in one of their last three research grants. The main reasons for inequitable partnerships were that major decisions were made and the research agendas set by partners in the Global North.

Four survey respondents replied that they had declined potential partnerships because the role was limited to data collection, they had not been involved from the beginning, or the area was not a good fit. Two respondents had withdrawn from partnerships with researchers in the Global North after it had been funded. In the first case because there were inequalities. In the second case, because the partners from the Global North did not want to implement the project as per the proposal.

In the survey responses, having to have a partner from the Global North, not being able to apply as the Principal Investigator, not having enough time to put the application together and ability to find out about the call were identified as the four biggest challenges faced by researchers from the Global South when applying to international funding calls.

Based on their experiences the attendees identifies a number of behaviours, approaches and mechanism which help to establish and sustain equitable partnerships:

**Behaviours:** respect and trust

**Approaches:** equality, transparency, mutual learning, mutual benefit, mutual understanding, understanding the local context, longer term partnerships and accountability

**Mechanisms:** joint agenda setting, conflict resolution and mitigation, sharing resources, co-ownership of outputs and data, communication, clear roles and responsibilities,

In particular frequent communication, clear roles and responsibilities, shared responsibilities and mutual respect were highlighted as the most important factors in making a partnership equitable.

Following group discussions the participants developed 4 statements of expectations for research partnerships which have been synthesised to produce the following statement.

*The partnership should aim to be equitable and transparent. There should be clearly articulated equitable distribution of resources, responsibilities, effort and benefits. The partnership should ensure the ethical sharing and use of data which is responsive to the identified needs of society. The process should be based on mutual respect and be guided by mutual trust, accountability, transparency, effective communication, constructive engagement and mutual learning. The partnership should recognise the value of different inputs, different interests and different desired outcomes.*
Recommendations for funders

The participants identified that funders can play a role in supporting and enabling equitable research partnerships throughout the funding cycle and made the following recommendations.

During the application process funders could:

Provide guidance to applicants on the expectation of equitable partnerships

- Require that research agenda are designed or co-designed by partners in the Global South
- Put guidelines in place on the role of investigators, the fair sharing of funds and resource and the ownership of data/intellectual property
- Require a collaboration agreement be put in place

Support partnership development

- Provide more time for the application stage to enable partnership development. Where possible timelines should consider school and public holidays.
- Support partnership development through matching tools etc
- Put in place a proposal development fund for applicants who have passed a pre-proposal stage to support face-to-face meetings and the active engagement of all partners in the development of the application

Make the application process more accessible to applicants from the Global South

- Increase the publicity around call alerts and/or launch calls on predictable timeframes to help researchers from the Global South to identify opportunities quickly
- Provide an opportunity for researchers/research organisations to input information about the legal and institutional requirements from countries in the Global South
- Remove institutional quotas as a means of demand management
- Provide more opportunities for researchers from the Global South to engage with funder before proposal submission.
- Simplify guidelines, provide help with the application process and reduce the complexity of online submission systems.
- Provide support to strengthen the capacity of researchers in the Global South to develop proposals e.g., proposal writing workshops for applicants who have passed a pre-proposal stage and/or provide examples of previously successful applications,

During the assessment process funders could:

Assess the equality of the partnership and the impact of the research in the Global South as part of the assessment process

- Give greater weight to applications: where the funding going to the Global South reflects the level of effort; for stakeholder driven projects; or for projects that are building capacity of younger researchers.
- Consider including the following as part of the assessment of applications
  - Capacity development of researchers
  - Research infrastructure development
  - Community development of target community
  - Policy maker engagement
  - Dissemination of key results/documentation
• Ensure that the peer review process is impartial and includes an appropriate range of subject matter experts with knowledge of the local community. Reviewers should be selected from the Global North and South.

Put mechanisms in place to ensure that applicants from the Global South are involved in all aspects of the assessment process

• Applicants from the Global South should have the opportunity to nominate or block potential reviewers.
• Provide applicants from the Global South with an opportunity to present and defend their proposal and an opportunity to respond to reviewer’s comments before a decision.
• Provide applicants from the Global South with constructive feedback on the strengths and weakness of the proposal directly and give an opportunity for them to engage with funders directly.
• Ensure that the decision making process is transparent and information is provided to researchers from the Global South about who was successful.

Strengthen the capacity of researchers from the Global South in the peer review process

• Provide training to researchers from the Global South to build capacity on the peer review process

During the lifetime of the project funders could:

Actively support the partnership

• Require that projects have external advisory boards composed of experts from the Global North and South who support the joint review of the project’s progress
• Develop systems to regularly evaluate the equality of partnerships and play a role in conflict resolution
• Require that the project has a risk management mechanism
• Provide support for face-to-face meetings between partners and joint dissemination activities etc
• Provide seed funding to pursue opportunities that arise during the project and flexibility to allow projects to evolve to address emerging challenges.

Reduce the burden of financial and administrative processes

• Support the development of standard operating procedures for financial management – exchange rates, accounting etc. Ensure timely disbursement of funds.

Provide mechanisms to enable researchers from the Global South to engage with funders and funders’ systems

• Provide opportunities for researchers from the Global South to interact with funders directly
• Funders could review their processes to consider how reporting mechanisms such as researchfish® could be completed by all participants not just the principal investigator.

Support continued capacity strengthening in the Global South

• Provide ongoing capacity strengthening in the Global South e.g. funding for training and acquisition of equipment
After the project is completed funders could provide:

Support for impact activities
- Provide support for the dissemination of findings and their uptake into policy and practice by providing funding for the fair dissemination of results – provide support for dissemination through publication, policy briefs and stakeholder dissemination workshops and support policy formulation. Support post project institutionalisation of key outputs – tools, products and methods.

Support for evaluation activities
- Support learning and evaluation from the project and compile lessons learnt.

Access and/or links to follow on funding
- Support teams by providing links to new funding sources for emerging opportunities arising from the project, or providing bridging funding to retain operation of core research teams.
- Ask for a project sustainability report and link that and the final report to extension of the project.

Translating Research Outputs into Policy and Practice
In response to the survey, 75% of the participants indicated that they had translated research outputs into policy, societal and/or economic impact. Of these 92% said that it had been difficult or very difficult.

The attendees identified a number of challenges and barriers to translating research outputs into policy and practice which can be grouped under five main themes.

Institutional factors such as existing bureaucracies and legislative processes, lack of investment by government and regular changes in political figures and policy makers which make it difficult to build long term relationships can act as barriers.

Engaging with and getting buy in from policymakers and stakeholders from the beginning of projects can be difficult. There is limited trust on both sides and many competing priorities.

Acceptability of research outputs especially when there is disagreement between research results and official political data/view or in new/developing areas can pose a challenge to translation. The nature of the agency that commissioned/funded the research can also influence the acceptability of the outputs.

There is a lack of capacity amongst researchers for interpreting research outputs in terms of policy implications, formulating policy briefs and communicating with policy makers. Policy makers often lack the skills to utilize research outputs. Research institutions also lack capacity for knowledge management and communication with policy makers. Lack of inventiveness and complacency about translation can also be barriers.

Expected modes of involvement are costly and funding agencies often provide limited support for policy engagement beyond dissemination of results in academic journals.

The attendees identified some approaches to overcome these challenges and barriers.
Align the research agenda with the national priorities to ensure that the research is relevant to policymakers

Engage with relevant policymakers and stakeholders including local implementation groups and communities from the beginning and in a meaningful way especially where there is a possibility that the research outputs may challenge the status quo. There should be an opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in co-creating the programme and have joint ownership and interpretation of the results.

The research programme should be designed with the translation of the research outputs in mind this will help to identify the context and the key stakeholders. It will also ensure that there is a clear plan for how and when to engage these groups. Build relationships and trust by regular engagement and sharing of information throughout the process. This also helps to manage expectations. Building on local knowledge to understand the local context can help increase research output acceptability.

The products and approaches used to present research findings should be specifically tailored to the target audience. Keep it short, simple and less technical. Researchers need training to make sure that they have the right skills to ensure that research outputs reach policymakers and stakeholders in a simplified and meaningful way.

Rigorous research that is well designed, conducted objectively and results that are correctly interpreted in the local context could help to overcome issues of acceptability. Engaging a champion who is well-respected can also help.

Build capacity for translation of research outputs into policy and practice through the formation of government policy research units, identifying champions to bridge the research and policy communities and providing training to enhance capacity for policy analysis and formation. Partnerships between the Global North and South could help to build capacity and sharing of good practice.

Recommendations for funders

The attendees identified that funders could enable the translation of research outputs into policy and impact through the following approaches:

Create an enabling and supportive environment for translating research outputs into policy and practice

- Provide guidance on the process of translating research into policy and practice
- Provide dedicated budget for research translation activities within grants to cover necessary salary, tools, resources, equipment and activities and opportunities for follow on funding for pilot studies to further develop innovative ideas and/or for validation and testing of project research results to aid translation.
- Provide opportunities to incorporate champions to facilitate translation of research outputs.
- Provide a mechanism to connect researchers to policy makers and stakeholders such as platforms for policy interaction

Seek evidence that the project is relevant to national priorities and that there is local buy in and support

- Require that stakeholders and policy makers are involved in proposals from the beginning and that there is evidence of co-production and consultation. There should be a plan for early and continuous engagement with policy makers and...
implementers, detailing how results will be shared, the policy/practice implications and the key risks.

**Dedicate a component of the application and assessment process to the description and assessment of the uptake of research outputs into policy and practice.**
- Applicants should identify the type of impact, the deliverables and the beneficiaries.
- There should be a plan for how policy makers and beneficiaries will be engaged, how findings will be translated and what outputs such as policy briefs will be produced.
- The assessment of the application could include a scoring component related to the translation activities.

**Build and support capacity strengthening for research translation**
- Provide training for researchers and policy makers to build capacity, support sharing of best practice and lessons learnt, provide funding schemes for cross-sectoral exchange programmes or provide a forum for policymakers from different countries to engage and share experience.
- Develop schemes and awards to recognise and reward researchers for involvement in research translation.
- Encourage the institutionalisation of activities to support research translation within research organisations and government policy frameworks.
- Support institutional growth in the Global South by covering overheads so that institutions have greater capacity to engage policymakers. Provide institutional support to enable the development of in house policy liaison officers.

**Conclusions**
The workshop report provides a framework for funders to develop good practice in supporting equitable research partnerships and maximise impact through North – South research funding programmes and offers funders a valuable lens through which to review their existing funding processes.

UKRI is committed to using the recommendations detailed in this report to identify opportunities to further embed the principles of equitable research partnerships in its research programmes.
## Annex 1. List of workshop participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Economic Policy Research Centre</td>
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<td>Taberner</td>
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<td>Water and Land Resource Centre WLRC</td>
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<td>Professor</td>
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<td>African Academy of Sciences</td>
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<td>Sampa</td>
<td>DFID Tanzania</td>
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Annex 2. Workshop agenda

UKRI – KFPE Workshop: Working in Effective Partnerships to Address Sustainable Development Goals

Date: 12 – 14 September 2018

Venue: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Oyster Bay, Slipway Road Msasani Peninsular, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Workshop Agenda

Wednesday 12 September

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<td>Welcome Dinner</td>
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Thursday 13 September

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<td>08.30 – 09.00</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Professor Stuart Taberner, UKRI</strong></td>
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<td>Welcome address</td>
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<td><strong>Professor Nelson Torto, African Academy of Sciences</strong></td>
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<td>09.00 – 12.15</td>
<td>Session 1. Engaging researchers, policy makers and governments from the Global South in agenda setting: identifying best practice</td>
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<td><strong>Session Chair Professor Stuart Taberner, UKRI</strong></td>
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<td>Presentation: Involvement in Agenda Setting for Bilateral/ Multilateral collaborative Research Programmes: Impact and Experience by National Research Fund, Kenya</td>
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<td><strong>Dr Jemimah Onsare – National Research Fund, Kenya</strong></td>
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<td>Breakout session 1</td>
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<td>12.15 – 13.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>13.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Session 2. Identification of best practice in North – South research partnerships</td>
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<td><strong>Session Chair - Dr Jemimah Onsare – National Research Fund, Kenya</strong></td>
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Presentation: Coping with the challenges in sustainable development oriented research partnerships

**Professor Thomas Breu, Director CDE, University of Bern and President of KFPE**

Presentation: Experience of working in North – South research partnership (title TBC)

**Dr Sarah Ssewanyana, Economic Policy Research Centre**

Breakout session 2

15.00 – 15.30  Tea/coffee break

15.30 – 17.45  Session 3. Identification of best practice in North – South funding calls

**Session Chair – Dr Alphonsus Neba, Programme Manager, DELTAS Africa**

Presentation: UKRI funding processes
**Dr Sarah Plowman, UKRI**

Presentation: title TBC
**Dr Boniface Kiteme, Director, CETRAD**

Breakout session 3

17.45 – 18.00  Wrap up day 1

**Professor Laurent Goetschel, University of Basel, Director, Swiss Peace Foundation**

19.30 – c21.30  Dinner

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**Friday 14 September**

08.30 – 09.00 Welcome back, introduction to day 2
**Professor Thomas Breu, Director CDE, University of Bern and President of KFPE**

09.00 – 10.45 Session 4. Working in partnership to translate research outputs into sustainable development impact in East Africa

**Session Chair – Professor Laurent Goetschel, University of Basel, Director, Swiss Peace Foundation**

Panel discussion: Challenges and barriers to the translation of research outputs into policy and practice
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<th>Time</th>
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<td><strong>Dr Honorati Masanja, Chief Executive Director, Ifakara Health Institute</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Marianna Balampama, Country Director, Health Policy Plus, Tanzania</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Professor Paschal Mihyo, Senior Research Fellow, REPOA Policy Research for Development</strong></td>
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<td>Breakout session 4</td>
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<td>10.45 – 11.00</td>
<td>Tea/coffee break</td>
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<td>11.00 – 12.15</td>
<td>Breakout session 4 - continued</td>
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<td>12.15 – 13.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>13.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Session 5. What is the role of funders in supporting the translation of research outputs into sustainable development impact</td>
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<td><strong>Session Chair – Professor Reuben Marwanga, Technical University of Kenya, Chair National Innovation Agency</strong></td>
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<td>Breakout session 5</td>
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<td>15.00 – 15.30</td>
<td>Closing remarks</td>
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<td><strong>Dr Boniface Kiteme, Director, CETRAD</strong></td>
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