Innovation, mutual learning and collaboration among donor agencies: an IDRC perspective

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Outline

• IDRC’s approach to programming on research and innovation ecosystems: individual and organizational capacity-building

• Thoughts on successful donor partnerships: productive donor agency partnerships and “non-traditional” collaborations

• Ideas for capacity-building through bilateral and multilateral collaboration, of particular relevance to granting agencies
Overall context

• Science base for SDGs, research and innovation central to SDG 9 in particular
• Evidence of increased political for public research investments at national and regional scales
• International and national funding agencies under pressure to show “early wins” and value for money
• More fora and platforms for international funders to come together
IDRC Programming Focus

Agriculture and Environment
- Agriculture and food security
- Climate change
- Food, environment, and health

Inclusive Economies
- Employment and growth
- Governance and justice
- Maternal and child health
- Think Tank Initiative

Technology and Innovation
- Foundations for innovation
- Networked economies
Foundations for Innovation programming

- Individual capacity-building
  - Scholarships, fellowships, research chairs, etc.
  - Targeted STEM programming
- Organizational capacity-building
  - Science granting councils
  - University faculties
  - Academies of science
- Leading-edge collaborative research
  - New North-South, South-South and regional collaboration
  - Increasing role of developing counties in key research areas

“Research on research”: Importance of evidence and tools from science policy to inform and guide funding!
Foundations for Innovation programming

Science granting councils initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (DFID, NRF)
Foundations for Innovation programming

*Early-career women scientists in the developing world (SIDA, OWSD)*

Organizational capacity-building

Leading-edge collaborative research

Individual capacity-building
Foundations for Innovation programming

Building capacity for government science advice (INGSA / ICSU)

Organizational capacity-building

Leading-edge collaborative research

Individual capacity-building
Foundations for Innovation programming

**Trilateral research chairs in sub-Saharan Africa (NRF)**

- **Organizational capacity-building**
- **Leading-edge collaborative research**
- **Individual capacity-building**
Partnerships between donor agencies and beyond

• **Shared “philosophies”:** capacity-building, agenda-setting in the Global South, allowing pluralistic views of research quality, gender sensitivity, open access to research results

• **Complementarity / synergies** (portfolio = more than the sum of its parts): reflect both researcher and stakeholder demands, broad expertise, build capacity in “supply” and “demand” sides of research, different components of the science system

• **Non-traditional partnerships:** granting councils, academies of science, private sector, foundations, university associations...
Reflections from recent Global Research Council discussions

• Driven by **international** changes in scientific enterprise and collaboration dynamics; **national policy** changes (new, reformed research councils); **trends** (SDGs, open science)

• Seeking frameworks, modalities for **collaboration and learning between agencies**, beyond bilateral and “punctual” approaches (workshops, staff exchanges, etc.)

• **Learning from existing platforms** to tackle priorities for granting agencies: designing, academic / non-academic research, managing research funds, open data, strategic planning, etc.

Concluding remarks

• Organizations have a collective role to play **beyond “donors”**
  - Enabling learning among grantees
  - Sharing best practices between donors
  - Developing tools, evidence to inform management of R&I
  - Explicitly consider how to affect R&I systems

• **Broadening** types of partnerships and the role of science granting councils in the Global South
  - Empowering national research councils to develop and administer research agendas
  - Considering range of partners that can act in various parts of the R&I ecosystem
  - Learning from existing modalities and build on existing platforms