



# Environmental Economics Program Evaluation

An Evaluation of the Sida-funded Capacity Building  
Program (CBP) in Environmental Economics and  
the Environment for Development (EfD) Initiative

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# Preface

This report presents an evaluation of the Environmental Economics Program (EEP), that consists of the two sub-programs; Academic Capacity Building Program at University of Gothenburg (CPB) and the Environment for Development Initiative (EfD). The two components are designed and led by the Environmental Economics Unit (EEU) at University of Gothenburg (UoG). The EEP program is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

This engagement between the EEU and Sida began in the early 1990s with support for a Doctoral program. This timeframe is considered in this evaluation, however, the focus is on the period from 2011 to 2014. The engagement has been previously evaluated in 2006 (Holmberg) and 2010 (Alberts) and, with acknowledgement of these assessments and the specific terms of reference for this evaluation, this report is principally concerned with the academic outcomes of the programs. The evaluation has been conducted by a team from EnvEcon of Dublin, Ireland, in line with the prescribed terms of reference and the methodological approach which was detailed in our inception report (see Appendix 2 and 3) and presented to the client. Volume I of the report is structured as follows: The summary context and findings are presented in the preface and executive summary. The methodological approach is then described, followed by an overview of the findings with respect to the CBP and EfD programs under headings of relevance, efficiency, sustainability, effectiveness and impact. These general findings are followed by a number of sections of specific focus which deal with the research assessment, the evolution of the EfD program, structural changes and linkages, and progress in relation to gender issues. A summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the combined programs is then presented. The report is closed by a series of specific and actionable recommendations which address specific requests from the ToR (see Appendix 1), as well as points which became apparent to the evaluation team during the course of the work. Volume II of this report contains a number of appendices which offer greater detail in regard to the approach, data and analysis. The inclusion of a second volume was necessary in order to respect the constraints on the length of the main report whilst, in parallel, allowing for full disclosure of material gathered, as well as the associated review and analyses conducted as part of the evaluation process.

The time for undertaking this review was short. It would not have been possible to compile the evidence and assess performance without the professionalism and support of the Secretariat in Gothenburg, the Sida program officers, and the staff of the six EfD centres. We are grateful for all of the cooperation offered in progressing the evaluation. While considerable primary data is generated, we also rely on data as reported, or otherwise provided to us, from those evaluated. Whilst deficiencies and inconsistencies were investigated, ultimately, there is a strong reliance on these data. However, any errors in the interpretation of these data are the responsibility of the authors.

# Abbreviations

<b>AERC</b>	African Economic Research Consortium
<b>CBP</b>	Capacity Building Program
<b>CEEPA</b>	Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy in Africa
<b>EEP</b>	Environmental Economics Program
<b>EEU</b>	Environmental Economics Unit
<b>EfD</b>	Environment for Development initiative
<b>FEEM</b>	Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Equivalent (staff member or student)
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RA</b>	Research Assessment
<b>RFF</b>	Resources for the Future
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>SRC</b>	Stockholm Resilience Centre
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
<b>ToR</b>	The terms of reference for this evaluation
<b>UoG</b>	University of Gothenburg



# Executive Summary

The evaluation has determined that the Environmental Economics Program is of a very high standard. The work is embedded in an economics department of notable (top 100 globally) and growing international stature, and is producing well-trained graduates with the capacity and ambition to conduct and deliver high-quality, policy-relevant research.

Standards are high in part because the student selection process is rigorous; the acceptance rate of applicants (7% of the total pool of applicants since 2003) is low; this, combined with careful, hands on management, results in a remarkable retention rate – only 3 withdrawals out of 30 PhD completions since inception. Interviews with EEU staff and students, as well as a review of formal evaluations, point to a reciprocal appreciation of the technical qualities and personal commitment of each group. Our own review of the course materials and lecturers indicate a well-balanced course structure led by credible and internationally well-regarded staff. Furthermore, an ex post assessment of PhD performance subsequent to graduation reveals evidence of successful and influential researchers and policy actors internationally. Evidence regarding participants in the CBP specialisation course is less detailed, though again there is strong demand for participation in these courses by students (21% acceptance rate), and high regard for the courses.

Our research assessment shows that, of the papers assessed (64) from the EEU, 91% were considered to be of a quality recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour; a third were considered 'excellent' and 22% were classified as 'world leading'. Such a standard benchmarks the EEU alongside some of the best research outfits in Europe. As expected, the standard of papers (111) from the EfD centres was lower, but nevertheless 70% were of a quality that is recognised internationally. The policy impacts of the work from both EEU and EfD research are judged to range from very good to excellent and a series of sample policy cases are included in Appendix 6 of this report. The quality of research is further linked to a strong and well managed research process administered by the EEU which allocates funds in a competitive framework which incorporates independent peer review, welltimed feedback and review, as well as high quality support for effective writing and policy outreach.

The performance of the EfD centres and quality of outputs is remarkable in the timeframe from their establishment. There are, however, fragilities underlying this success and to varying degrees the EfD centres remain critically dependent on a handful of key individuals for their vibrancy and performance. This is not a note of failure, but one of caution. Sida funding and EEU management remain vital for the EfD centres both to survive individually and to grow as a network. That said, the centres themselves must continue to work towards increasingly independent and high-quality local authoring of publications, as well as increased diversification of their funding. As regards financial sustainability, reported figures show strong overall progress for the EfD centres over time. However, this aggregate progress somewhat masks the individual situations of the centres.

Dividing the centres into two groups, the reported data indicate that, from 2011 to 2013, direct Sida funding contributes an average of 81% of resources to the centres in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, which then falls to 37% across Costa Rica, China and South Africa. Thus, whilst progress is encouraging, there remains a need for significant support and, indeed, a dynamic and tailored approach to the needs of individual centres.

Connected to the above point, it was noted that, whilst the work environment is generally of a high standard at the centres, individual variation can be substantial. Whilst improvements in the research environment take time and resources and relate also to the situation of the host institution, some practical recommendations are made in this regard where we believe improvements can be made.

In summary, the evaluation finds evidence of substantial synergies between the CBP and EfD programs. They bring together intellectually talented students, a course program of international calibre, a workplace that supports the research mission, a platform that allows and facilitates interaction with the policy process, and a strong integrated management structure. The programs have been leveraged to good effect in terms of training, teaching, research outputs and policy influence.

## Recommendations

Economics is the science of scarcity. Environmental economics is about managing the scarcity of environmental and resource endowments - doing so in ways that are efficient, encourage and facilitate innovation, and that are integrated with social and economic development so that conservation and development are two sides of the same coin. For developing countries, achieving this integration is essential to their own economic and social future, but it is also at the heart of achieving a sustainable planet. The two Sida programs are a fundamental and essential pivot to providing the capacities, the ambition and the aptitudes to make this transition successfully.

In developing countries, environment and resources will not be protected and conserved unless there is a clear and understandable link to economic and social development that is accepted by key decision makers. A credible, evidence-based case must be made that Ministries of Finance and Economic Development understand and accept. And then these ministries and their political and administrative leadership need to have effective policies that make it as easy as possible to convert this insight into action.

The essence of environmental economics is to demonstrate the value of environmental and resource endowments for economic and social development and to show what policy mixes will produce outcomes that are sustainable economically and socially, and that protect the future of the earth. Credibility demands that this case be made, and continues to be made, by people who are trained to a high level in environmental economics, who know how to frame choices and solutions in manners that are perceived as usual and relevant, and that are there shaping the national discourse. Unless this capacity is on the ground with the appropriate training, institutional positioning and focus, the rhetoric of sustainability and achieving a better way of living on the earth will not be converted into reality on the ground. The University of Gothenburg capacity building and EfD programs are together delivering this reality.

Overall, we recommend that Sida keeps investing in both programs – they are doing essential work, are well managed, and are very good value for money. However, the following recommendations, detailed in full in the main body of this report, should be actioned in return.

1. Develop a promotional strategy and team to support fund raising and financial stability moving towards widening and diversifying the sources of funds, possibly around specific themes.
2. Continue planning for the expansion of EfD to other regions/participants. Continue to facilitate ‘bottom up’ leadership of research and policy outreach, but provide some top down ‘steering’ to better relate the work to the emerging global agendas, especially as regards climate change and ecosystems.
3. Pursue academic hosting for EfD centres but cultivate and sustain policy linkages.
4. Review the research focus for the EfD Network to take advantage of opportunities where the skillsets and local connections of the EfD initiative can thrive, and achieve further clarity with regard to the research vision and resource use over time.
5. Review financing arrangements to encourage the pursuit of greater financial efficiency with research projects at the centres by incentivising cost savings on any given project after the award has been made.
6. Consider some moderate educational engagement between the Beijer Institute and the EEU PhD program.
7. Foster a supportive engagement between SRC, Beijer and the EfD. The “Future Earth” initiative has the potential for providing a framework where the contributions of environmental economics on the ground can help drive the achievement of a liveable future earth.
8. Sustain the PhD program path but investigate selected innovations and changes such as remote internet access to courses, altering the PhD intake cycle to allow for a greater pool of quality candidates, and/or offering ‘crash courses’ to new PhD students.
9. Continue to develop the accessibility to knowledge for education and prepare a discussion document on distance learning.
10. Continue to foster interaction between EfD centres and with the policy community. Centres should emulate EfD Tanzania’s policy advisory board. Ensure communication to policymakers of the value of the internationally peer-reviewed academic rigour as provided by the network.
11. Develop an improved system for tracking graduates using internet resources.
12. Require coherent and consistent reporting from all centres to a prescribed template and retrospectively apply this to historical data. Particular attention should be paid to providing clear estimates of the share of centre funding attributable to Sida and the criteria for what constitutes membership of an EfD centre.
13. Adopt compact indicators as part of the transition to a manageable global network according to the criteria presented in this evaluation.
14. Sustain progress on the gender equality plan. Progress should be monitored over time in several centres to see if possible barriers to the appointment of quality female staff can be addressed.
15. Have a network-wide discussion of the approach to Sida-connected remuneration to ensure appropriate incentivisation balanced with securing the EfD in its host institution and ensuring appropriate financial controls.
16. Investigate adjunct status (or similar) to afford centres access to online journals via UoG.

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# Methodology

In line with the terms of reference specification, we have followed the OECD-DAC evaluation standards (OECD, 2010) and the guidelines from the Sida evaluation manual (Molund and Schill, 2007). Furthermore we have considered the deficiencies outlined for prior evaluations from Forss et al. (2008) and sought to emulate the proposed standard, specifically, building an evidence-base for our findings and presenting clear actionable recommendations.

An important stage in ensuring the evaluation met the required scope and standards was the development of a detailed inception report and inception ‘matrix’ which outline how the evidence and analysis would be marshalled to deliver insights and responses with regard to the specific questions in the ToR and the requisite OECD-DAC criteria. The documents were approved by the client and summary versions are found in Appendix 7 and 8.

The evidence-base upon which this evaluation relies is comprised of a mix of both primary and secondary, qualitative and quantitative information. It is important to note that we also rely on reported data and evidence from those being evaluated. Whilst we have probed for deficiency and inconsistency, generally these data and responses are taken in good faith as it would not have been possible within the timeframe and available resources to visit all centres and cross-check all data. The main methods and evidence sources are summarily described in Table 1.

## Overview of Findings

The findings of the report are initially distributed under the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria headings of “Relevance, Efficiency, Sustainability, Effectiveness and Impact”. In order to manage the length of this report and given the operational and administrative overlaps, the CBP and EfD aspects are handled jointly under these headings which address a number of questions from the ToR. However, there are a number of major questions posed in the ToR which are treated here independently within separate headed sections. These include the findings of our Research Assessment (RA), the financial sustainability of the programs, progress on gender issues and the summary SWOT analysis. Volume I of the report is complemented with an extensive set of appendices contained in Volume II, wherein the basis for our findings is set out in greater detail.

## Relevance

*Relevance considers how well the programs align to the challenges they seek to address. It examines integration with the target community and evaluates levels of local ownership, participation, sensitivity to local considerations and if the approach fits with local needs and Sida priorities.*

Table 1 Description of evidence source categories

Evidence Source	Description
Research Assessment returns	Submitted data for our Research Assessment (RA) served as a principal evidence base on which to assess the quality of the research units, their environment, impacts and outputs.
Papers, theses and reports	Individual papers, annual reports and theses abstracts were considered as part of the RA process, and in establishing a perspective on the EfD initiative.
Centre evaluation questionnaires	Each of the six EfD centres was required to complete an evaluation questionnaire. This document is attached as Appendix 8. The questions elicited responses in regard to numerous defined aspects of the evaluation – such as plans for funding diversification, perceived strengths and so forth.
Centre policy case studies	The evaluation process required the centres to work with the secretariat to compile and report a series of policy impact case studies as part of the review process.
Mission to Africa	The evaluation team travelled to Tanzania to conduct an on-site review of the centre and associated external stakeholders. This trip incorporated interviews with the Directors of EfD Kenya and Ethiopia. The mission report is in Appendix 7.
<b>Mission to Gothenburg</b>	The evaluation team travelled to Gothenburg to conduct a series of interviews and focus groups with the EfD secretariat, external stakeholders (e.g. Stockholm Resilience Centre, Beijer Institute) and University colleagues. Doctoral and specialisation course students were also interviewed in groups and as individuals. The meeting also afforded an opportunity to discuss evidence for the evaluation.
<b>Financial audit reports</b>	The centrally conducted (i.e. in Sweden) audit reports of the EfD initiative by Ernst and Young were reviewed.
<b>Contracts and legal agreements</b>	The research proposals (work plans) and contractual agreements for phases of Sida funding were reviewed. The new institutional arrangements for EfD (legal structure and organisation) were also reviewed.
Web analytics	Analytical data relating to the EfD website ( <a href="http://www.efdinitiative.org">www.efdinitiative.org</a> ) were obtained from a 3rd party and reviewed
Student data	Data relating to the numbers of students, their gender, origin and subsequent activities reviewed. Application and acceptance numbers for courses have also been considered with were filters for gender and origin.
Course material	Course outlines for the PhD program and topics for the specialisation courses were reviewed. Course evaluation outcomes conducted ex post of course delivery were also reviewed.
Prior evaluations	The prior reviews of Holmberg (2006) and Alberts (2010) were considered as part of this review, though care has been taken to form fresh and independent perspectives. In addition, prior correspondence and comments from Sida in regard to the EfD initiative were also considered.
Strategic plan	The strategic plan outline for 2013 – 2017 was reviewed.
<b>Guidelines</b>	A variety of guidelines and other documents were also requested and reviewed. These and include template documentation, the gender equality plan and guidelines for policy interaction communication.
Sida program officers	As part of the evaluation, the respective Sida program officers (João Morais and Linda Bystedt) were interviewed to obtain insights on the programs from the Sida perspective.

## Key Points

In the context of supporting capacity development and delivering policy and research that can have a positive impact on poverty alleviation and sustainable environmental management, the CBP and EfD initiative are extremely relevant. They provide the training, supports and focus which develop researchers that are capable of rigorously addressing relevant national challenges. They then put in place the supports to design, develop and deploy a research strategy for those researchers which offers direct policy input and creates a valuable indigenous resource of knowledge and expertise.

Our findings suggest that Sida and the EEU have engineered an excellent pairing of programs that are well aligned with Sida's mission statement and priorities. Importantly the developed program can be scaled to exert greater influence over time. The expansion, to date, of the centres and the outlined strategy for the future are positive. There are, however, some challenges with further expansion and these are addressed later in the report.

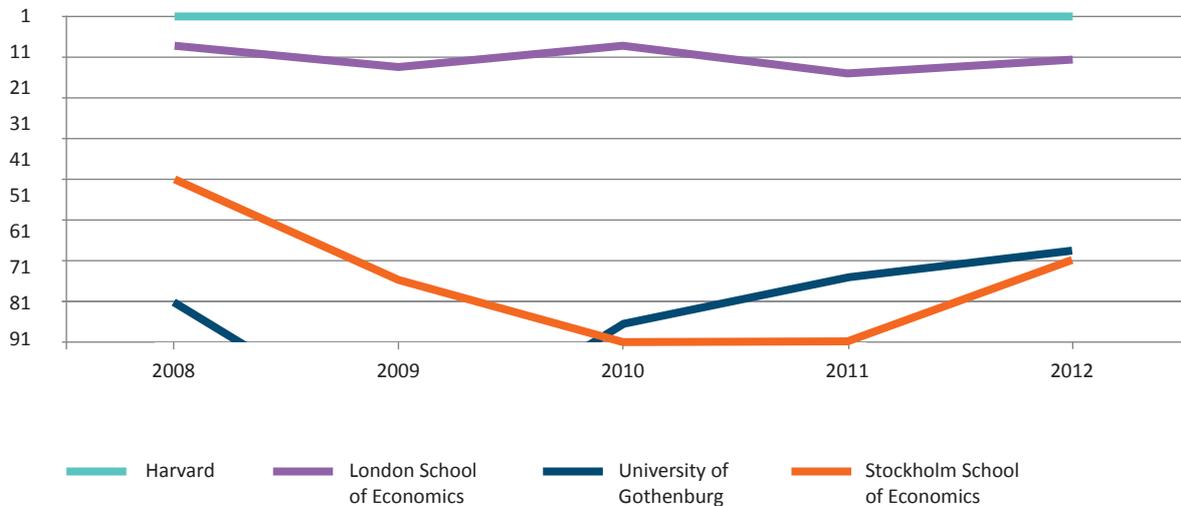
## Evidence and Issues

The CBP and EfD are built around environmental economics and it is important to consider the relevance of this foundation. A review of the social science research for global change by Hackmann and St. Clair (2012) shows exponential growth of articles relating to "climate" and "environmental change" between 2000 and 2010, with most of the publications found in environmental or economics-focused journals. At the same time one may observe that the regional distribution of authors is predominantly from Western Europe and North America. The findings of that 2012 report thereby support three key points. Firstly, that climatic and environmental change are topics of rapidly growing significance to the global research community. Secondly, that the bulk of research is carried out by environmental and economics-focused researchers. Finally, there is a paucity of such research in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America.

The CBP relevance has been considered through an examination of the course outlines, lecturers and student evaluations. The content of the courses, research activity of the lecturers, number of applicants and exceptional student evaluations all indicate a strong and well-run operation that is relevant to the needs of the students and the research community. The Economics department at the University of Gothenburg is ranked in the global top 100 of economics research units, and the environmental economics unit there is a large, highly regarded and extremely well-connected operation in this field of teaching and research.

The evaluation found that the EfD approach of having a local centre plays a major part in allowing the initiative to operate with awareness and understanding of local policies and administrative systems. The research outcomes by centre indicate that they apply their methodological training with a sensitivity to the policy needs of the local/regional areas, whilst the roles of EfD-connected researchers in the local and regional policy processes indicate a high regard for EfD-trained staff, and a clear integration with the local and regional decision-making processes. For example, the approach of EfD-Tanzania, with regard to organising a biannual policy advisory board meeting and also delivering staff and staff expertise directly to the policy system, is a specific case where a centre has clearly aligned itself well with regional policies and administration systems. Whilst not all centres have such a board, there is clear evidence of EfD staff providing relevant and valued policy research and policy support to decision makers in their regions.

## Single Year Research Rankings of Top 100 Global Economics Schools



At a higher level, the overall objectives of the EfD initiative are poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The tools by which these challenges are addressed are capacity building, policy research and policy application. Previous evaluations and the correspondence between Sida and the EEU (e.g. Assessment Memo Nov 16th 2010 from Sida to the EEU) all agree on the relevance of the initiative to the problems identified and our evaluation has found no evidence to suggest that the underlying rationale for the intervention has changed, nor the validity of the approach. Whilst, such high-level ambitions have no single avenue to achievement, the EfD initiative can certainly offer a part of the solution.

## Efficiency

Efficiency is concerned with how well resources have been managed and used in the planning and delivery of the programs. It questions whether outcomes may be maintained or improved with changes in resourcing, and whether the program is justified with regard to opportunity cost for the available resources. Specific questions on financial sustainability are addressed in a later section.

## Key Points

A review of the summary data from the Ernst and Young audits shows that the centres are adhering to the financial reporting standards required by Sida. The audit reports have also shown a willingness by the secretariat to engage and respond to queries, and the centres have largely followed suit where issues have been raised.

The CBP and EFD programs are administered by the same small team in Gothenburg who interact on a daily basis, so there is no inefficiency in delivery of outcomes and there are substantial cost savings in comparison to running the two strands separately. There is also regular interaction with the directors of the six centres, both individually and collectively. The EfD centres are funded modestly – including a small amount of core funding to supplement their local institutional support and access to a research fund which helps to generate relevant policy research.

The research management approach, whereby centres generate research proposals and work plans that are evaluated and, if approved, agreed, shows a clear structure to sound resource management. Overall, the contract agreements for research and core support seem adequate and a review of the centre work plans over time importantly shows clear progress from the early work plans in terms of the formatting, presentation and, most importantly, the content and specificity of the planned work.

There remain some outstanding points with regard to following certain procedures and templates as part of the reporting and auditing which we believe should be addressed as the initiative embarks on the next phase. The secretariat should be more clear with all centres as to exactly how reporting and accountancy matters are handled. This is not merely a matter of bureaucracy, as it also impacts on the ability of evaluators to assess comparatively the efficiency and effectiveness of the program in different locations, and may have a bearing on the prospect of attracting new international donors for the network. Relevant specific points are raised in the recommendations.

With regard to the CBP, the rates offered to PhDs, and in support of participation in the specialisation courses, are deemed reasonable by international standards allowing for the origin of the supported students and the associated additional expenses. Potential savings are limited. One suggested possibility would be to have more specialisation students take multiple courses to benefit from the travel savings that may arise, however, this is not recommended as a strategy as it would reduce the total number of students presented with an opportunity to participate.

## Evidence and Issues

There are a number of layers of management and interaction which support efficient operation of the EfD centres. The work plan, annual meeting and regular reporting should encourage efficient use of resources from the EEU side whilst, in all cases, the centres are connected to a host institution (e.g. University or Research Institute) which themselves offer another level of administration that should guard against inefficient resource use. As part of the self-evaluation, the centres generally rated themselves quite highly in terms of financial efficiency (~8.5/10), and an input-output based assessment would similarly suggest that the EfD resources have achieved a considerable amount (publications, teaching and training) in return for a reasonably modest financial investment. The research 'pot' for each centre is approximately 450,000 SEK a year and this is leveraged to deliver between 2 and 4 rolling projects at the centres. In the rolling period from 2011 to 2013 the Sida funds have supported some 94 research projects across the centres. The policy impact stories (Appendix 6) and research outputs (Appendix 4) confirm that the current investment is yielding strong returns.

As distinct from procedures and management, there is the question as to whether outcomes may be improved or maintained with a different level of resourcing. Given the small number of major cost headings in the EfD initiative (core support, researchers, travel and research funds) it seems unlikely, on the basis of our evaluation, that much more could have been done with less. As things stand, there is considerable evidence of co-financing from both the secretariat/University of Gothenburg, as well as from the host institutions and centres themselves in terms of staff time and contribution. Progress in this regard is discussed later in the report. The centre evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 8) requested details on EfD staff members (excluding associates) and the distribution of salaries between EfD and other sources. In general, only the communications or administrative officers receive a high share of EfD funding (e.g. greater than 50%). On an aggregate basis, 33% of reported staff had received no Sida funding in the current year, and 56% had received less than 20% of their total salary from Sida funds.

In summary, the current resources are delivering good levels of research outputs, supporting development of the centres, and are generally paying good dividends on the investment. This is related to the commitment of the secretariat, the quality of the human capital and the successful crowding in of other resources (e.g. in-kind time and other research funds). That said, on a project by project basis, there may be opportunities to have 'smarter' use of the funds. Such opportunities can only be realised by the centres and researchers themselves, and cannot be readily governed by a single rule.

A means of incentivising centres to seek further savings and to deliver more on the current budgets is discussed in the recommendations. All in all, however, the evaluators are not aware of any credible substitute in this context to the current approach of high-quality capacity development and research support given the specified objectives of the programs. One may only speculate as to whether others may have filled in this gap were the Sida support and EEU initiative not aligned to deliver the current programs. Certainly the other operations in this context (e.g. AERC) are deemed to fall short of the standard of training offered by the EEU CBP, and there are no clear examples of an alternative to the EfD initiative centres in this field. We believe it is a reasonable assumption that the distribution of knowledge and the profile of environmental economics research in the countries through the EfD centres would have suffered in the absence of the interventions and, that in some cases, the prior absence of any structured environmental economics program or capacity may have persisted without the intervention.

The efficiency of the CBP is considered separately. The capacity building program incorporates the Sida funding of participants on the PhD program at the University of Gothenburg which is now generally 6 students every other year, as well as Sida-funded participation of students in the specialisation courses offered at the University of Gothenburg. There is a new intake of PhDs underway and some 30 have been trained to date. In parallel, the specialisation course has trained approximately 300 individuals since 2002.

The funding for the PhD program is also slightly higher not only to level the diverse background of the students with respect to academic and language skills, but also to support them with policy training. EEU staff provide extended support to coach and bring these students to an internationally competitive standard. This is demonstrated by the productivity of former graduates after their training. At present, the monthly stipend is reported as SEK 16,000 which follows the Swedish rates defined for international students.

With regard to the specialisation course, it may cost approximately 35,000 SEK in total to bring a student to the course in Sweden and provide a stipend. The cost varies dependent on the number of courses in which a student participates, country of origin and so forth. Our interviews with the students would not suggest any indication of excess or wastefulness with regard to this funding and it seems a reasonable sum to account for international travel, accommodation in Sweden, living expenses and course participation. Sending the course lecturers to a destination is likely impractical given their other teaching, personal and research commitments, and then the need to bring some students to that new location could also add to cost (e.g. domestic travel within Africa).

Remote learning with tutored support may offer an additional option with regard to broadening the impact of the teaching, similarly a passive remote learning option may offer some added effect (e.g. just the videos and material lists) if internet speeds allow. However neither of these should be viewed as a cost-saving replacement to the physical participation in a course or program for students. Connected to this point, it was reported that some lecturers have an issue with recording and release of courses. The reasons for these should be investigated, discussed and, where possible, overcome.

Overall, the evaluation finds that the CBP is a good use of resources given the program objectives and the evaluation cannot recommend a comparable lower-cost alternative to physical attendance and participation in the PhD programs or courses. The networking value and wider experiences of coming to the coordinating centre in Sweden are valuable. That said, we do make recommendations with respect to preparation for these courses as well as for passive or dynamic e-learning development that could extend the reach and influence of the program at a modest time and resource cost.

## Sustainability

Sustainability addresses some similar questions to those already discussed under relevance, with special attention to the structures, focus and operation of the programs and the prospects for a lasting influence from the programs in the absence of future donor funding.

### Key Points

With regard to the structure, focus and operation of the CBP, we find that the EEU is strong, stable and well managed. The demand is also clearly in place as the courses are, in all cases, heavily oversubscribed, with an average application success rate of just 21% for the specialisation courses since 2003 and a PhD application success rate of just 7% since 2003. It was also observed that the PhD program is extremely effective – in so far as it produces very high-calibre graduates who can compete intellectually with the best from elsewhere and can, and do, return home and perform in their local environments to great effect. It is cost-effective and the retention rate is remarkably high (only 3 withdrawals out of 30 in the PhD program; 2 for personal reasons). Given how demanding the program is, this is a signal achievement. In summary, the CBP is sustainable as long as the scholarships can be provided and, consequently, the influence of those who have received the high-quality training and experience of participation at UoG is likely to persist.

With regard to the EfD centres, the sustainability considerations vary between centres and can be approached in different ways. From a financial point of view, there is something of a divide between the three northern African centres (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) and the three other funded centres (South Africa, Costa Rica and China). From 2011 to 2013 the former group reports an average of just over 80% of its centre budget coming from EfD funds, whilst for the latter group the average share is closer to 37%. There are some potential issues in the reporting of budgets and shares (dealt with later in the report), however, clearly, the former group has a greater dependency on Sida funds and are, therefore, more vulnerable to any change in levels of support at this stage.

The evaluation has found that a particular value of the Sida funding has been the sustained commitment over time, which has afforded the centres an added degree of stability with regard to research activity and centre administration. Any reduction in current funding would have to be carefully weighed against such concerns. As the centres have become more established, their development has enabled a more independent assertion of research plans and ambitions. This is in evidence from the development of the clearly improving annual work plans by centre over time, as well as the increasing success of the centres with regard to partnerships and new funding.

With regard to the research focus, the Research Committee's (RC) process creates an important support and a quality filter that should maintain a sustainable and relevant research agenda at the centres. That said, the RC is not overly prescriptive in terms of research plans. Rather, each centre is afforded the chance to identify, and target, locally-relevant research which supports their longer-term survival prospects.

### Evidence and Issues

The CBP will not survive in the absence of a donor. At the PhD level, the students that have been funded under the CBP would not have the financial means to participate in the program at the EEU without direct support and financing. Similarly, even participation in the specialisation course would be beyond the means of most of the students who are currently offered scholarships under the CBP. These positions were confirmed in interviews with the current intake of PhD students and a current class of specialisation students. However, this lack of sustainability is to be expected with any such capacity-building program and in no way suggests that the skills and knowledge imparted to those who had participated in the CBP would not persist and continue to yield returns over time.

However, the nature of such scholarship programs is to provide opportunity where none may otherwise present, and this is what is achieved by the CBP with the Sida support.

In terms of the EfD initiative, while individual staff at the centres may survive a withdrawal of funding as individual researchers, it is less likely that the centre would persist as an EfD centre or even that the individuals would remain in their country of origin. It is the Sida funds which provide important policy research funding which generates a lot of the activity that gives the EfD initiative life in terms of research and related teaching activities and ensures a quality standard. Similarly, the travel support for the annual research meeting, and the pivotal role of the secretariat in all groups, are what combine to create the linkages that, in turn, deliver a vibrant network. Thus, whilst staff would, in many cases, be expected to continue to utilise their skills in this field of research, the initiative would likely lose focus, coherence and connectivity were research, secretariat and travel-support funds withdrawn. This is not to say that change cannot occur in time and, certainly, there are clear signs of progress with regard to improving financial sustainability, as described in a later section.

In broad terms, the longer-term sustainability of the EfD initiative is progressing on a number of fronts. The centres report as being well-run and having a reasonably good operational relationship with their hosts. They also show clear signs of ownership and engagement with local policy actors. Responses from the centres indicate that, in a number of cases, there has been institutional learning for the hosts as they engage with the EfD unit and, through them, the systems and structures enforced as part of the overall EfD network management from Gothenburg. In some cases, the impact may be less significant but, at the least, the EfD procedures represent a good standard model of research and research management and the centres' longer-term survival prospects are certainly enhanced by the regular honing of skills related to research bids and research management. We did note, however, in the course of our mission to Tanzania, the importance of ensuring local policymakers are informed about the value of the network and the importance of the quality standards of the research for evidence-based policymaking.

## Effectiveness

Effectiveness considers the extent to which the ambitions and objectives of the program have been realised. Furthermore it questions the degree to which these changes are attributable to the program and seeks insights with regard to the reasons that underpin successes, failures or the need for ongoing work in this context.

### Key Points

Overall, with regard to the CBP and EfD, this evaluation has found that both programs are effective with regard to their ambitions. The evidence for the following successes are contained throughout this report and appendices. For brevity, these points are bulleted together below:

- A quality capacity-building program has been designed and delivered
- Skills and capacity have been developed and graduates have returned home
- Centres have been created to capture and direct the returning talent
- Local ownership and direction has been gradually seized by the centres
- Research has been well-managed and monitored
- Policy Research has been completed and policy advice has been communicated
- Students have been taught and have spread out into the academic and professional systems
- Civil servants have been trained and supported
- Academic output has been generated and quality has been improved

## Evidence and Issues

The human-capital development and the delivery of quality research outputs are clearly attributable to the programs. Whilst there are other programs in, for example, Africa (e.g. AERC funding for Masters and Doctoral degrees<sup>1</sup>), these are not offered by institutions with the same academic standing as the EEU at UoG and would not offer the same level of international exposure and recognition as the EEU program. The PhD program has achieved approximately an 80% return rate to the country of origin, with almost all ‘non-returners’ still engaging in origin-country related research. Interviews with current students (PhDs and specialisation course participants) indicate that, in almost all cases (90%+), the students intend to go into teaching and to apply their skills in their country of origin. In summary, the CBP has been shown to be of high quality, the staff and graduates are committed to the concept, and the graduates have achieved considerable success.

In terms of the EfD, the centres offer ‘on-the-ground’ expertise, local sensitivity and connections and, thereby, serve as a valuable bridge between academic research and local/national policy. All of this adds to the effectiveness of the combined programs. In the absence of such a presence, international research may struggle to gain the traction and trust necessary to lead to implementation in the host countries. The combination of the CBP and EfD initiative is a highly effective model.

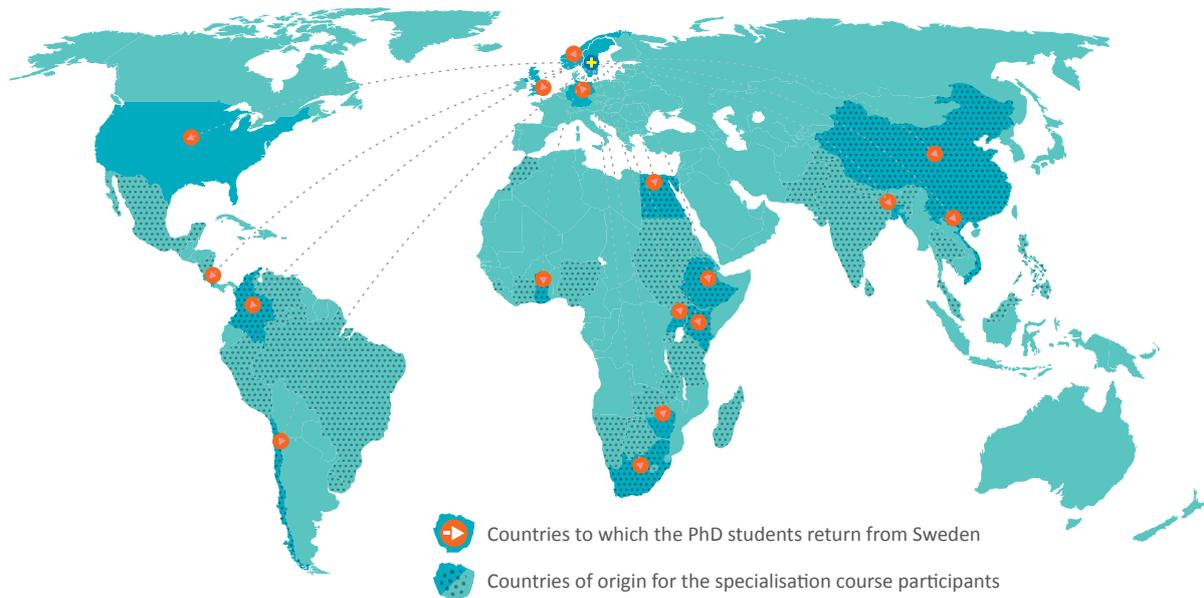
The centres are guided by the secretariat in a supportive, as opposed to a dictatorial, manner and this approach has allowed the centres to develop policy research that is locally and nationally relevant, whilst also carrying the imprimatur of the secretariat and wider network in terms of methodological rigour. Each of the centres reported a strongly positive experience of the EfD secretariat and network with regard to research support and guidance, and were satisfied that their research was of clear relevance to local and national challenges. It was noted that, to date, the secretariat has shown an exemplary level of commitment with regard to travelling to, and engaging with, the centres in an effort to support their initiation and progression.

It should be remembered that the EfD initiative is a long-term process, as the initial founding and subsequent development of an EfD centre requires a considerable level of human-capital development. Similarly, the objectives of the EfD initiative are fundamental challenges that will not be addressed through a single initiative. This mission is a long-term one that will hopefully grow in influence, stability and impact over time and, at this point, the evaluation finds that the two programs have indeed been highly effective in delivering on their respective ambitions and objectives.



1 <http://www.advance-africa.com/African-Economic-Research-Consortium-Awards.html>

## Flow of individuals from Sweden back to countries



## Impact

Impact examines the outcomes of the program both positive and negative, direct and indirect. It seeks clarity with regard to those impacted, as well as the degree to which outcomes can be attributed to the program in question.

## Key Points

The EfD centres work to strengthen and develop capacity in host countries and local institutions by addressing three major gaps as identified by the EEU unit in Sweden. The three identified gaps are: a communications gap, institutional gap and a capacity gap. The communication gap is rooted in the disconnection between researchers and policy makers. The centres aim to remedy this gap by dedicating research and resources to reach the policy process and address local policy issues. The institutional gap is the lack of an institutional platform that meets the current environmental and economic policy challenges, which is why the centres and the Sida-funded programs are essential. Finally, the capacity gap, which is that there are not enough environmental economists working and doing research relevant to policy at a high standard in these countries, the EEU programs address this through the development of high-quality PhD graduates as well as PhD programs and courses that will set the standard for this field going forward. A fundamental impact of the EfD centres, and CBP, is that they are building social capital, and delivering policy research projects, from this constellation of people.

Within the six funded centres of the EfD initiative (South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, China and Central America), an important aspect to acknowledge is that the centres are different in many respects. The variations stem, inter alia, from different institutional arrangements and local conditions, as well as differing types of local opportunities and challenges. Therefore, whilst, on the whole we find that the impacts of the EfD centres are positive, the scale and areas of influence are not necessarily uniform. The performance of the secretariat and centres, with regard to delivering consistently positive outcomes, is a testimony to their willingness to engage and understand the needs of each individual location, as well as their dynamism and ability to tailor, and support, a positive intervention in a given situation.

The summary impacts have been outlined under the effectiveness heading, and the quality of the CBP and the outcomes of the RA are presented under their own headings later in the report.

## Issues and Evidence

### Policy

The research has supported positive policy impacts with a selection of 4 examples for each centre presented in Appendix 6. These studies illustrate a focused application of skills and expertise to topics of policy relevance in the field of environmental economics and resource management. Each centre also reported a negative or neutral policy impact story which serves to highlight a capacity to understand the barriers to implementation or failures in procedure associated with their research.

### Publications

The research publications are assessed in detail within the following RA section and are not repeated here. Notable progression is evident in terms of the quantity and quality of outputs from the programs.

### Teaching and training

The CBP has trained some 30 PhDs since inception and approximately 300 have participated in the specialisation courses since 2003. EEU staff have also contributed to external programs (e.g. Thomas Sterner to AERC) and EfD staff have, in many cases, established, or enhanced, environmental economics programs in their country (e.g. China and Tanzania). The centres offer the sustained local expertise and human capital necessary to deliver environmental-economics related teaching (of students) and training (of civil servants) in the EfD countries. This ongoing process will further develop institutional capacities and skills.

### Centre growth and stabilisation

Impacts are evident in the growth and increasing establishment of the centres. Key measures which show progress include staff numbers at the centres, which are rising over time, and the degree of funding diversification where the trend is similarly showing a positive upward trajectory.

### Positive spillovers to hosts

In all cases, the EfD centres have reported that EfD has contributed to the capacity of the hosts by introducing and/or enhancing the environmental-economics research and teaching capacities available. In a number of cases (e.g. Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania) it is also perceived that the presence of the EfD unit has had positive spillovers on research-management capacity through process learning and experiences over time. Responses from a number of the centre directors indicate that the ex-ante situation in terms of environmental economics research was negligible, or highly fractured, in their countries; South Africa, perhaps, being the exception. Since the introduction of the EfD centres and the CBP, there has been a coordinated focus on efforts to utilise environmental economics to support policy in all countries and the EfD has contributed to this. This is evidenced by the policy reports, research outputs, as well as a number of examples of individuals from the EfD or CBP moving into influential research and policy positions nationally.

Similarly, the EfD approach to research awards and evaluation continues to develop important skills within individual researchers and their institutions with respect to bidding for competitive funds internationally. Whilst capacities and performance vary amongst centres, the impact of regular research-bid composition is undoubtedly a positive one. Another impact of exposure to a high-quality international network, with regular meetings and interaction, is to create valuable linkages which raise both the likelihood of international collaboration and the delivered standard of output.

# Specific Focus

## The Research Assessment

The RA (full report in Appendix 4 with underlying returns in Appendix 5) employs a methodology that assesses the quality and quantity of scholarly outputs in terms of academic standing. However, it is also important, particularly given the development objectives of Sida-funded programs and the specific objectives of the EfD and CBP programs, to recognise the broader impact of the research outputs beyond the traditional academic measures.

The methodology for the RA in this evaluation adopted the principles of the UK REF 2014, which we feel encapsulates a broader approach to the impact of research than traditional metrics analysis. Specifically, it considers three “profiles” - the quality of the research outputs, the impact of the research outputs beyond academia, and the quality of the research environment. We utilised a star rating from 0 to 4 to assess these attributes. There is, of course, quite a degree of subjectivity about this approach but it is unavoidable and is the norm in research assessment exercises. For benchmarking purposes, we used the UK RAE 2008 which assesses the first profile only, i.e. outputs, and then we give our views of the likely scores of the activities in terms of the research impact and research environment we are assessing and whether consideration of these would likely increase, leave unchanged or decrease the overall rating of the EEU and centres. In recognition of the differences in stages of development and size between the various units, for the purposes of this analysis, we divide the returns into EEU Gothenburg and then consider the EfD centres as one group.

### Research Output Evaluation

Returns were made by the EfD Director (G. Köhlin) for all research fellows of the EfD program. In addition, as we endeavoured to assess the quality of the environment within which the activities take place and the support provided by this environment, all staff members of EEU Gothenburg who interface with members of EfD and teach or supervise on the PhD training program were returned for assessment. In all, 16 members of EEU in Gothenburg were returned as were 30 Senior Research Fellows, Research Fellows and Junior Research Fellows from the EfD centres.

The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs used were originality, significance and rigour (see full methodological details in Appendix 4). EEU Gothenburg returned a full complement of academic papers. In all, 64 papers were assessed (4 per person returned) with 91% considered to be of a quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. A third of all returns were considered “excellent” with a remarkable 22% rated as “world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour”. While the figures speak for themselves, in terms of benchmarking of EEU, a comparison with the environmental studies subject division of the RAE 2008, suggests that EEU Gothenburg compares very favourably with the work ongoing in top UK universities (Table 2). This is an impressive achievement even allowing for certain caveats discussed in Appendix 4.

The EfD centres also returned close to a full complement (as per the RA methodology) of academic papers. In all 111 papers were assessed. Across the six centres, on average, over 70% of all publications returned were considered to be of a quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour, with all but one centre returning material half or more of which was considered to be of this 2\* standard or above. Given the small numbers returned, care must be taken when comparing centres and interpreting the figures presented in Table 3, suffice to say, that China and South Africa notably returned more than 20% in the 3\* “excellent” category with Costa Rica returning a remarkable 87% in the 2\* or above “internationally recognised” category.

Given that a key objective is to build a capacity for high-quality research for development intervention, it is our view that a score of 50% or more of research output being scored in category 2\* or above, i.e. internationally recognised research, should be considered a very good result. Thus, we believe the results are very encouraging albeit that we note some potential vulnerabilities in the conclusion of this section.

**Table 2. RAE 2008 Results: “Geography and Environmental Studies”**

Quality Profile					
(percentage of research activity at each quality level)					
	World leading 4*	Internationally excellent 3*	Internationally recognised 2*	Nationally recognised 1*	Unclassified 0*
University of Cambridge	30	40	25	5	0
University of Oxford	30	40	25	5	0
University of Leeds	25	45	25	5	0
University College London	25	40	30	5	0
King's College London	20	50	25	5	0
London School of Economics	20	50	25	5	0
Open University	20	35	40	5	0
University of Edinburgh	20	35	30	15	0
University of Manchester	15	50	30	5	0
University of Sussex	15	50	30	5	0
EEU Gothenburg^	22	36	32	5	5

^ authors’ comparative assessment



Park-pricing workshop, Kruger National Park, RSA

Table 3. Centre Research Output Results

Quality Profile					
(percentage of research activity at each quality level)					
	World leading 4*	Internationally excellent 3*	Internationally recognised 2*	Nationally recognised 1*	Unclassified 0*
China	0	33	67	0	0
Costa Rica	0	14	73	13	0
Ethiopia	0	11	67	16	6
Kenya	0	5	35	40	20
South Africa	0	23	37	22	7
Tanzania	0	13	50	37	0

## Research Impact Evaluation

Our analysis, presented in full in Appendix 4, shows, overall, the impact of the research beyond academia is excellent as would be expected in a program where development intervention is the ultimate goal. Therefore, our expert judgement is that the EEU itself should be ranked in the 3\* to 4\* category in terms of its impact activities, given that the majority of its work has very considerable and, in many ways, outstanding impacts in terms of “reach and significance”. This is certainly the case when one considers the geographical reach of the CBP and EfD programs.

Turning to the centres, each one returned four case studies for analysis to assist us in understanding the impacts at local level and beyond. For each impact case-study, in order to evaluate the “reach and significance” of the impact, the centres were asked about the research and the specific objectives, its impact, who benefitted, and what changed, and how the outcomes can be verified. Full details of the case studies can be found in Appendix 6. Whilst the quality of the case-studies varied, and the ability to measure the impact was difficult in some cases, overall, our expert assessment is that the centres all provide considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance and, in spite of their small scale, some of their work has the potential to be of a 3\* level, namely, very considerable impact in terms of research and significance that is of interest internationally.

## Research Environment Evaluation

From our mission to Gothenburg in March 2014, it was clear to us that the research environment of EEU Gothenburg is excellent and stands shoulder to shoulder with some of the best programs and facilities internationally. This is to be expected given that the environmental economics program is based in a mainstream department of economics which is ranked in the top 100 globally. Appendix 5 contains indicators of esteem for the EEU staff and staff of the centres. Course evaluations by the students are excellent as is feedback on the PhD experience. From perusal of the abstracts of the PhD theses, it is clear that the approach of a “paper-based” PhD pays dividends in hastening the pathway to journal publications as does the co-authoring approach. In our expert view, the PhD program and surrounding research environment is comparable with the best applied environmental economics programs internationally.

As regards the EfD research program environment, there is a structured research process by which funding is allocated out to centres. This is an extremely important part of capacity building as the training received by EfD Fellows in applying for competitive research funding will prepare them well for obtaining funding from other sources and in shaping and applying to forthcoming national research programs.

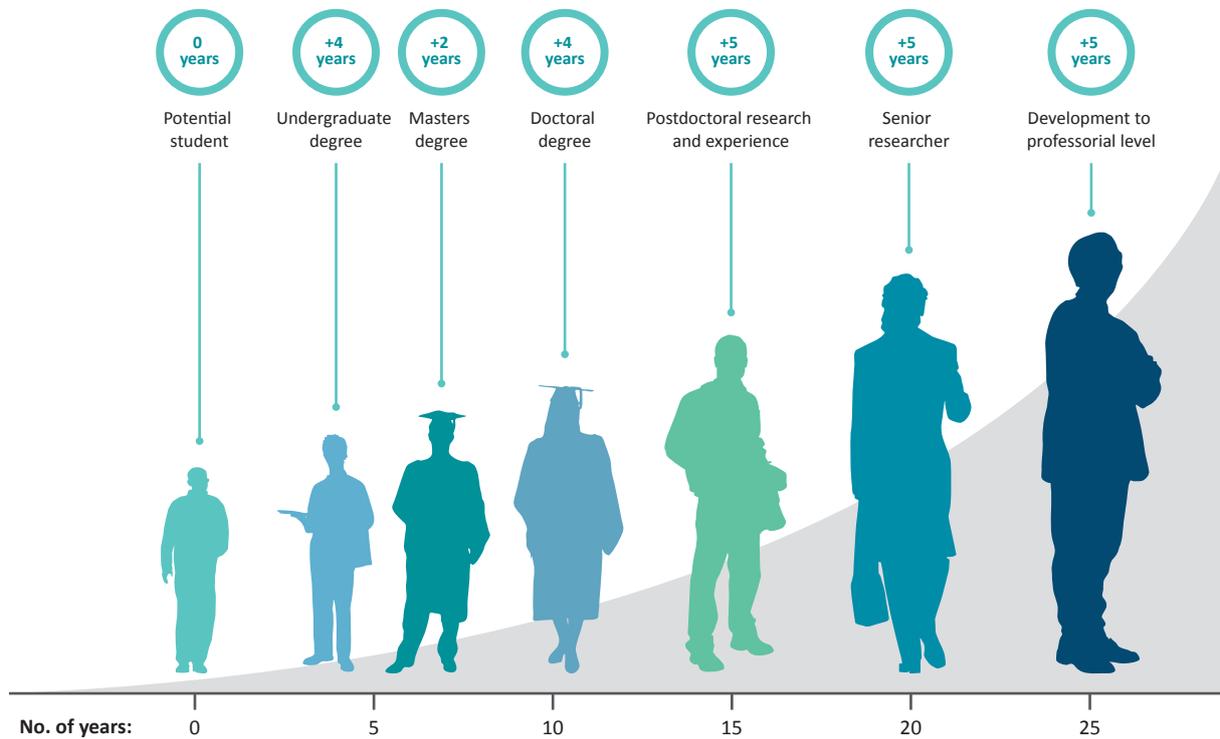
A particularly notable aspect of the EfD research process is the strength of the Committee containing external international experts such as Peter Berck from the University of California Berkeley and Carolyn Fischer of Resources for the Future. The ability of EEU to attract such calibre to the University and to deploy it in the research process is very impressive. A further notable support structure in the research environment for the Centres is that an EfD Discussion Paper is expected to be published in December of year 3. This is then peer-reviewed and double-checked by the Research Coordinator and Editor (currently Professor Berck) with subsequent copy-editing supports. In our view, these final steps of paper preparation and publication are an exceptional assistance to improving the quality of research and preparing it for submission to journals.

When evaluating the centres themselves in terms of research environment, one would not expect them to meet the standards of excellence one would find in a top university in a well-resourced developed country. As part of the evaluation, we requested a description of the physical research facility at each centre. In summary, some centres in Africa report difficulties with internet speeds, hardware and access to online journals. However, China, Costa Rica and South Africa all report “first-world standards” albeit that Costa Rica has difficulties with journal access.

In addition the physical resources component of research environment in the centres, there is also the question of centre activity and the calibre and mix of staff. In this regard there has been progress at the centres, with growth in centre staff numbers reported over time. Indeed it takes time to develop the critical mass of top quality human capital. Thomas Sterner provided a useful analogy that building a research environment could be likened to the building of large infrastructure project whereby, from the planning stages to the construction and final output, it could take 10-15 years or more. The making of a Professor, researcher, or team of these (as a sustainable research environment may require) can certainly take decades.



## Capacity Development



The centres are also showing evidence of having influenced the wider environmental economics research environments in their countries. The total number of students exposed to environmental economics by the centres has risen from 229 in 2007 to 1166 in 2013. Students in Master's level have been sustained at a solid 113 per annum. The total number of PhD students taking environmental economics courses has risen from 0 in 2008 to 92 in 2013. All of this is strong evidence of an expanded academic capacity and an improved environmental economics research environment. We also see evidence of further outreach in the 11 academic workshops hosted per year, the 50 presentations at these conferences by Fellows and students, and about 15 or so academic conference presentations. All of this is combined with a very solid rate of publishing of academic papers rising from 12 in 2007 to 40 in 2012 and dropping back to 29 in 2013. Such up and down cycles are common in research units and the trend is upward.

Overall, when it comes to the Research Environment assessment, we rate the majority of the EEU activity in the 4\* category, namely, an environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability. The centres fall between 2\* and 3\* depending, to a large extent, on the academic capacity surrounding them. For example, EfD South Africa has the great advantage of being associated with the strong University of Cape Town and EfD China is based in the excellent Peking University. Generally, we find that the development so far is very encouraging. We believe that the programs can meet their objective of establishing, within each host country, a research environment that can have a major impact on environmental and development challenges in the regions.

## Overall Research Assessment Rating

We believe more than 90% of EEU activities to be of international quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour and, remarkably, more than 22% of activities are world leading. Across the six centres, at least 70% of activities are considered to be of a quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour and we believe that, in all centres, over half of all activities would be considered to be of a quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Given the small numbers returned, care must be taken when comparing centres and interpreting their figures suffice to say that China, South Africa and Costa Rica’s returns for this exercise were particularly strong.

The general findings of the research environment assessment is that there are variations between the centres in terms of facilities with South Africa and China reporting high quality international standard physical research environments, and Costa Rica in that same bracket. In the case of Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, there are constraints at the centres in terms of the reliability and quality of internet access, the quality and performance of hardware and the availability of software. There are also some challenges providing office space. In the case of these three African centres and Costa Rica, the level of access to electronic journals is raised as a principal concern to be addressed. Overall, a threat is the small scale of the activity and the reliance on particular individuals who, if lost, would leave a large hole in the capacity and vibrancy of the centre concerned.



Finally, in terms of the earlier mentioned caveats, it is important to acknowledge that the chosen benchmark for the EfD centres is a very demanding standard given their various stages of development and the identified research challenges they must overcome. However, the identified evidence base on which to contrast the EfD centres with other developing country institutions and programs was inadequate. Acknowledging this, it is worth noting we have been very flexible in how we counted the research presented as being part of EfD and EEU. Some papers submitted did not have an affiliation to EEU or an EfD centre as they were authored prior to the person being in residence, or were written by a visiting fellow of EfD but this was not noted on the publication. There is, therefore, a need for greater clarity as to what constitutes a work related to the EfD and the PhD program. Secondly, there is some overlap in co-authoring between EEU and the centres and within the centres themselves. Finally, as regards the centres, it is notable that there is much co-authoring of papers by people normally located in institutions in developed countries and we noted a clear correlation between the quality of the output and outlet where there was co-authoring with a developed-country author. This is understandable at this stage, and beneficial to the centres, however, it will be important to watch whether this changes over time thereby demonstrating the development of ‘stand-alone’ capacity within the centres.

# Specific Focus

## Evolution of the EfD Program

The creation and development of an effective research and policy outreach program requires:

- i. Intellectually talented students, who can excel at demanding coursework and develop the capacities to work within a coherent, ambitious and visionary high-level research agenda
- ii. A course program which is of international calibre, delivered by individuals who are esteemed by their peers nationally and (especially) internationally
- iii. A workplace that supports the research mission - places of employment with the willingness and ability to hire and provide a supportive base for serious enquiry and for research that is peer-reviewed and published nationally and internationally
- iv. A platform that facilitates productive interaction with the policy process – where evidence-based research informs the choices and decisions that shape outcomes in environmental and resource policy
- v. An integrated management structure that helps deliver the above

In relatively rich countries, these 5 elements can, and do, happen separately and, to a degree, automatically – universities recruit smart people, and train them to do high-quality research; they are then hired by existing organisations who understand the value of research and innovation, and the policy process interfaces with these individuals and organisations where they see value in doing so. In the least developed countries, all 5 steps are challenging but, in particular, steps (iii), (iv) and (v). People of talent who have completed a program of serious calibre often find that their home countries have nothing to offer that would allow them to continue to develop intellectually and undertake peer-reviewed research and produce peer-reviewed publications; and there is no independent platform from which they can provide the local policy process with input and advice. As a result, most do not go home, but find employment in the developed world, and/or drift away from research and devote their talent, training and energies to other endeavours.

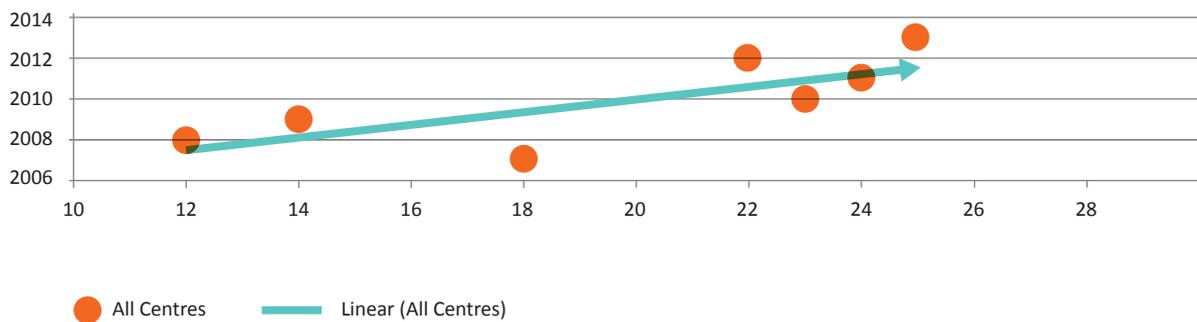
The essence of the Gothenburg program is to correct for this policy failure; the Environment for Development (EfD) platform ensures that the graduates do have a home to go to where their intellectual talents will be recognised and fostered, and their contribution to the policy processes in their home countries will be enabled and supported. In this section we examine the evolution of EfD.

### Evolution of the Financial Sustainability of the Program

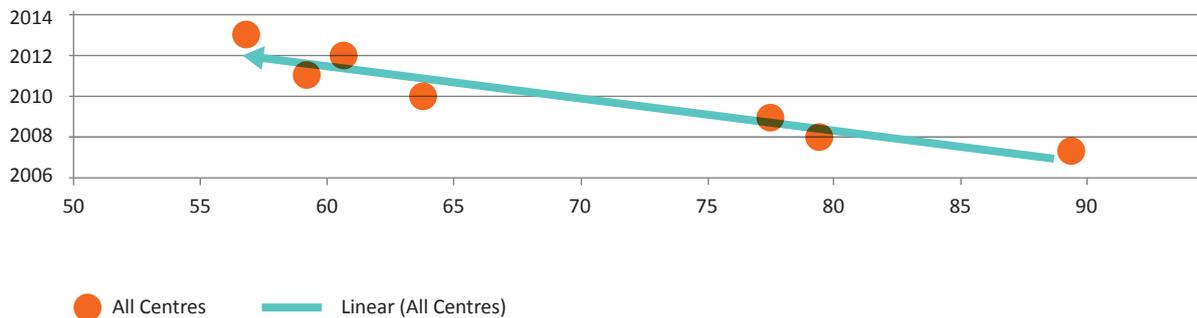
The financial sustainability of the centres is a challenge and, as noted, there are broadly two tiers of centre in terms of current financial sustainability. When combined, and averaged, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania report as having drawn approximately 80% of their budgets from the EfD in the period from 2011 to 2013, whilst the comparable combined average for Costa Rica, China and South Africa is 37%. Clearly the financial core support and support of policy research is important. Importantly, even for the comparatively well-resourced centres, it should be noted that the presence of a university-based salary does not guarantee funding to work on EfD relevant research and policy.

As such, the policy-research support from Sida provides an important source of research seed funding in the case of all centres, offering researchers the opportunity to apply their training to a research project under the umbrella of EfD relevant themes and in the discipline of environmental economics. In terms of progress on the diversification of funding sources and reduced reliance on Sida funding, it is important to acknowledge that funding cycles and patterns are often irregular and that, in this context, a period of less than 10 years is not a very long time. That said, the reported figures show evidence of progress both in terms of the absolute number of donors and sources of funding reported by the six centres, as well as a strong downward trend in the EfD share of centre budgets.

### All Centres No. of Donors/Funding Sources

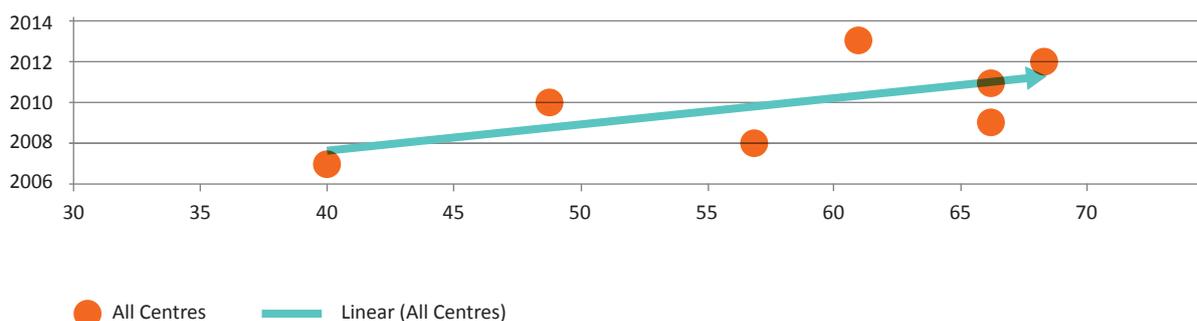


### All Centres EfD Share of Budget %



This progress comes against a backdrop of a growing number of non-associate staff at the centres and sustained research activity with some 94 reported projects from 2011 to 2013. However, sustained progress is needed in this area and the evaluation makes a number of recommendations in this regard.

### All Centers No. of Staff



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In order to continue to improve both the local ownership and the sustainability of the EfD centres, it is most likely that the best solution is simply to continue to do more of the same so that, eventually, each country has a research environment that can manage or deal with environmental challenges in their region and even develop to the point of producing PhDs of their own. This will provide a stronger base from which to develop further independence and stability.

There could be further financial sustainability in selecting specific centres that could take on more local or national ownership and maintain independent funding while still remaining part of the EfD global network. This would be the type of model that the centre in Chile has taken. Moving forward, the centres in China or South Africa may evolve to positions that can run on a financial model similar to Chile. However, this transition must be slow and patient as there is a very important strategic networking and exchange value in having these partners which must not be lost. Specific recommendations to sustain and accelerate the financial sustainability of the EfD initiative, in particular, are presented in the recommendations section of this report.

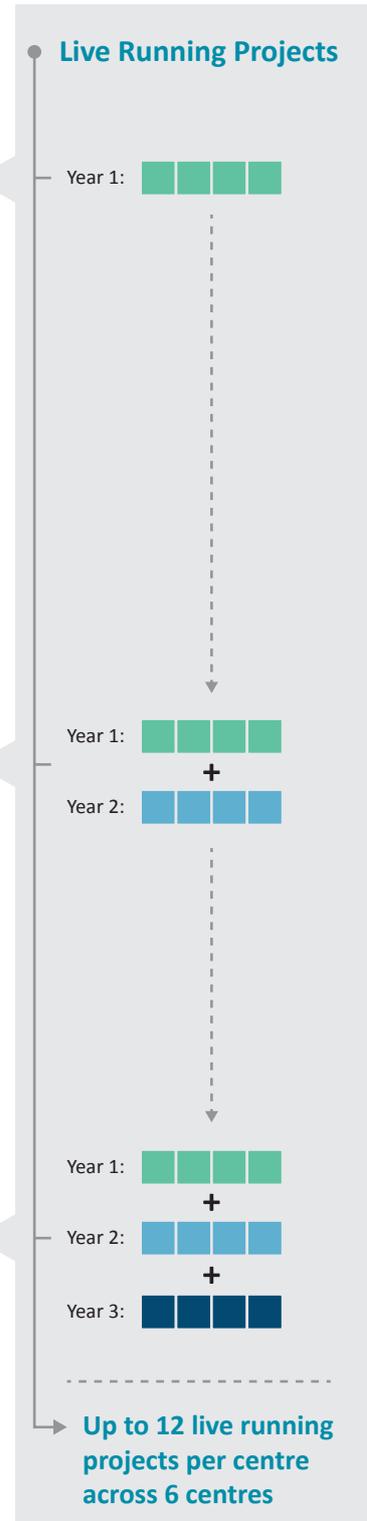
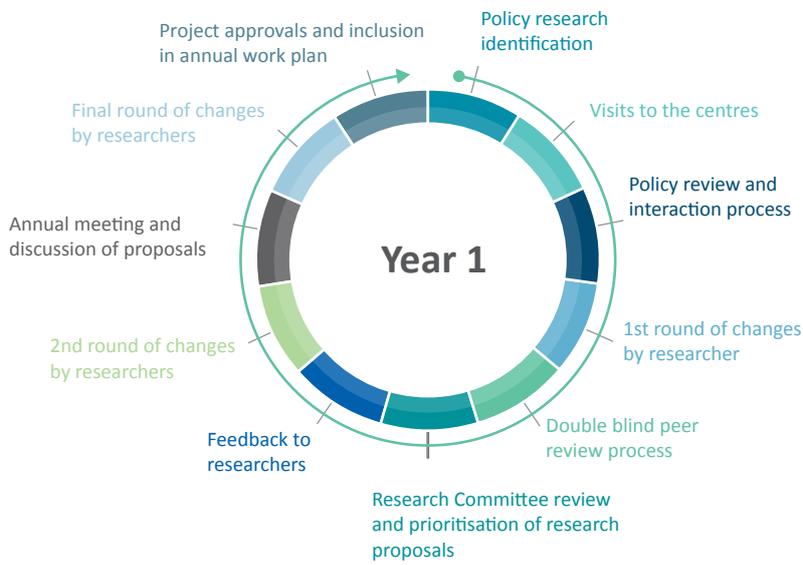
## Evolution of the EfD Program Research Process

The research process and research management of EfD (Research Process and Management Manual version from 20th January 2014) has been well organised from the outset and the recently proposed changes are sound. There is a clear structure to application for funds, a defined process for evaluation, high-quality peer-review and feedback, copy-editing support, and a strong committee at the helm. Overall, the approach to research design, selection and development is well thought out and, whilst it requires additional engagement (annual meetings) and resources (review process, copy-editing), it offers a practical means of balancing the local choice of topics, with an international filter with regard to methodology, rigour and relevance.

As of 2014, it is notable that there is a push to have a research brief generated more quickly after a working paper has been developed and approved by the research council. The research brief offers a non-technical synthesis of the work. A policy brief is also developed, where there is a belief that such is necessary, timely and appropriate. As a key objective of the EfD is to support the production of research that is policy relevant (not necessarily prescriptive) and timely, this drive for quicker generation of research and policy briefs is welcome. However, whilst policy workshops are run to highlight research outcomes and policy interactions, it will be important for centres specifically to target, and even directly deliver, their work to the policy system, in addition to the production of such outputs.

Other adjustments to the research process, which were discussed as part of the evaluation, include increasing competition between centres for funds (at present they compete internally for a sum, ring-fenced for their own centre), as well as a new approach to the selection, appointment and role of senior research fellows as part of the strategic development of the EfD network into a global consortium of leading environmental economics' think-tank units.

## Cycle of Research



# Specific Focus

## Structural Changes and Linkages

### Teaching Link and Revised Structures

#### Teaching Link for the CBP

EEU have demonstrated a willingness and capacity to engage in shared programming through their partnerships with the Beijer Institute and Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg. A further engagement on the educational front could see a shared course element from the Beijer Institute, of between 2 and 4 weeks, being accommodated in the 2nd year of the PhD program at EEU. Such a specialisation offering could then be returned from the environmental economics unit at EEU to the Beijer Institute. This could be trialled as a distance-learning accreditation process for a select group on both sides or as an auditing process to offer students broader training awareness. This point is addressed in recommendations.

#### Operational Link for EfD

Falkland's dictum - "If change is not necessary, it is necessary not to change" - is relevant here. There are, however, opportunities for the EfD and other groups to investigate how they may support and strengthen one another in their respective missions. Whilst no major changes are put forward as part of the evaluation, a number of recommendations do address linkages and synergies that may be explored with regard to utilising one another's networks and connections to greater effect.

#### Revised legal structure of EfD

There are changes underway with regard to the legal structure of the EfD. There is a stated objective to facilitate the centres in having varied funding streams and broadly the new structure will seek to facilitate the organisation with regard to receiving money, managing money and channelling it appropriately. This will also support the EfD in growing the network over time and including new centres, both developing (and in need of core funding) and established (as per the recent example with Chile). Setting up as a foundation with the EfD centres and Gothenburg may work. This would pull the centres out from under the UoG Department head and give more control to the new body. FEEM, a well-known Italian research foundation, may be worth contacting to discuss the details of such foundation models.

In a revised structure, the idea to expand the network could include new centres in locations such as Ghana, India, Uganda, Vietnam, and Colombia. In each of these cases, similar core support would likely be needed for each centre. Where funding does not increase from Sida, this would require the secretariat and centres to develop a clear financial strategy for how to alter gradually the status of certain centres to free up funds for new start-up centres. Caution is, of course, required with respect to such gradual changes, and planning will be necessary to mitigate the risk of losing a node in the existing network to accommodate a new member. It is, of course, also possible that new centres that do not require core funding will be secured (for example Chile, RFF). In addition, micro-management will become more challenging as the network grows. In all, the new structure makes sense, but will herald an era of significant change for the network, which must also be considered at this juncture. Recommendations are offered later with regard to preparation for reporting and management in a larger network, multi-donor situation and planning for redistribution of funds in the enlarged group.

# Specific Focus

## Gender Issues and Progress

Gender issues are assessed across three dimensions as per the ToR. Firstly, we consider gender in the context of the PhD program and specialisation courses. The number of male applicants to the PhD program has generally been about twice that of female applicants. Since 2003, 310 men have applied and 128 women. In the same period, there have been 25 PhDs awarded - 13 men and 12 women.

The success rate for male applicants is 4%; the success rate for female applicants is 9%. The specialisation courses have had roughly twice the number of male applicants to female applicants since 2003. A total of 468 men have applied and 241 women. The success rate of male applicants has been 20% and 22% for female applicants. The ‘production line’ of new capacity is, therefore, reasonably well-balanced with regard to PhDs. Overall we did not detect any strong gender-related bias or issues in regard to the PhD program and specialisation courses and, of course, advise that all awards should remain merit-based, but with sustained encouragement to boost application levels from women over time.

At the EfD-centre level, there is currently an even split of male to female staff in 3 of the 6 centres at varying grades. In Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, the staff rosters remain male-dominated though, in each case, there are arguably wider societal factors at play which influence the application rates of quality female candidates. These matters will take considerable time to address, but certainly, the EfD network would seem to offer equal opportunity and, in parallel, serves as a contributor towards change through the proliferation of the overall network ethos of being a supportive, friendly and non-discriminatory group. There are also key points of progress when we consider the appointment of Jane Mariara as director of EfD Kenya, and the even distribution of male and female PhDs in the recent intake.

**Table 4: Current Gender balance by centre as listed in evaluation assessment report<sup>2</sup>**

Gender by Centre	South Africa	Tanzania	Ethiopia	Kenya	China	Costa Rica
Male	4	9	8	14	4	7
Female	4	0	1	2	4	7

<sup>2</sup> In many cases the EfD staff listed include numerous staff that are not funded by EfD. For example, at EfD Kenya, only four staff are listed as having an EfD contribution to their salary, 2 of which are female, whereas there are a total of 16 researchers identified for the centre. This again raises the necessity of having clarity as to what exactly constitutes membership of an EfD centre, which is relevant for coherent reporting and tracking of progress.

The EfD network also has a role to play in gender issues through research. Numerous examples of gender being considered within the research exist across all centres. Topics addressed included wage and income inequality, domestic decision-making processes, and understanding gender roles in the context of influencing family health. Clearly gender should not be a topic just for the sake of it, however, we were satisfied that the possibility of gender-related issues or angles are clearly on the agenda of the research committee and in the minds of the research staff as they develop their work.

Finally, we investigated whether gender was considered an issue, or barrier, at the operational level for participants in the program or members of the EfD centres. With respect to gender discrimination in the work place, the evaluators interviewed specialisation-course students, PhD students, centre personnel, research directors and members of the secretariat. A number of these interviews were held individually, and in private, to mitigate against a fear of speaking out within a group setting. There was no single instance of gender discrimination reported and, broadly, the environment was described as being professional, but at the same time, exceptionally inclusive, warm and supportive.



Woman preparing manure for fuel, Ethiopia

# Summary SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

1. The CBP program is rooted in a strong core academic base at UoG (amongst the top 100 economics departments in global rankings) and with a strong research performance as indicated by our research assessment.
2. The EEU is a large, highly-regarded and extremely well-connected operation in this field of teaching and research.
3. The EEU has enjoyed great stability in core staff that lends consistency and coherence to the operation and objectives of the CBP and EfD.
4. The EEU has a clearly demonstrated track record of human capital development, with an exceptional 'rate of return' for graduates to their country of origin.
5. The EfD and CBP embed scholarship, research, capacity building and policy outreach on the ground in developing countries with research priorities shaped by local needs.
6. The EfD centre research (excl. EEU) has been independently assessed and, overall, approximately 70% of research returns are at or above an internationally recognised standard.
7. There is evidence of progress and success in terms of securing funding from other sources by the individual centres, which reduces dependency on Sida funding.
8. The EfD and CBP are characterised by effective management and administration and the secretariat is passionate, committed and keen for ongoing performance evaluation and improvement with regard to the CBP and EfD initiative.

## Weaknesses

Acknowledging the context of this work in terms of building capacity, expertise and impact, there are no significant academic or technical weaknesses in either the EfD or CBP. The EfD centres face challenges, but these are not weaknesses of the programs but, rather, part of the motivation for intervention. However, the following points may be construed as strategic challenges or weaknesses.

1. Telling the story of the EfD and CBP depends on the availability of clear and unambiguous evidence. The systems for tracking and monitoring key points of evidence must be made clear to all EfD members and CBP participants and, thereafter, enforced. At present, there are some deficiencies in this regard.
2. Over time the reliance of a centre on associates and external co-authors should be monitored to ensure that truly independent capacity is established. The current approach is necessary and valuable, but the degree of external support should, ultimately, decrease over time.
3. Finding the balance between pursuing peer-reviewed publication ambitions and responding to the needs of the local policy process requires ongoing thought and management. These ambitions can clearly support one another, however, there can be quite different timelines, pressures and deliverables required to fit the needs of either the policy or publication moulds. Similarly, linking local research to global issues may present varied agendas for finite funds.
4. Sida prioritises funds in line with development aid concerns, and in this regard the origins of PhD candidates to the programs can be influenced such that low-middle income countries receive priority over middle-high income countries. This can have the effect of somewhat narrowing the pool of PhD candidates available to the programs.

## Opportunities

1. The EfD network can be scaled up to the point where it is a well-recognised and highly respected global environmental economics network. A network of up to 20 members is plausible in the medium term. Such a resource of well-trained, well-connected and geographically-dispersed researchers offers considerable value. The existing network could become the go-to place for environmental economics research and policy advice and partnerships in Africa. It could build a strong reputation in the international climate change arena, with China being particularly relevant in this context. It could make substantial contributions to the field of ecosystem-services research, with Latin America being particularly important in this regard.
2. The EfD should tap more systematically into helping implement emerging global policy. For example, many African countries are becoming partners in addressing the UN's 8 Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>). The EfD centres can be primed to play a pivotal role in securing the recognition of environmental endowments as a key asset for sustainable development and could help countries develop effective and self-sustaining policies to address global policy goals.
3. Explore the potential for a high-quality, revenue-generating Master's program focussed on preparing graduates to assume operational executive roles in agencies and companies.
4. Develop and implement a policy with regard to consultancy which ensures that it is brought inside the EfD tent, provides mutual advantage to the researchers and the EfD organisation, and helps with the policy-outreach mission.
5. The quality of the course materials and teaching staff, as well as the connections to developing countries, suggest that the CBP and EEU could credibly aim to become a global leader in the provision of online courses directed at developing countries.
6. Gradually increasing competition for research funding across EfD centres should drive higher standards and quality.
7. There are various opportunities to experiment with the allocations of research funds. For example, considering a) the development of a network-level project, b) special short-term project financing, c) 'protected' start-up allocations for new centres as required.
8. Enhanced Collaboration with the Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Beijer Institute may unearth new donor or research opportunities for the EfD centres, or further improve the quality and breadth of training offered by all parties in their respective training programs.

## Threats

1. Managing external dysfunction is critical. The EfD depends to a large extent on local host support and participation, as well as an engaged local policy system. The EfD must nurture this support whilst ensuring that the centres retain freedom of expression with regard to their research. A larger network can give the EfD greater stability and resilience and offers the capacity to absorb short-term shocks to individual centres.
2. There are complementary networks, programs and capacity-building initiatives. However, none offer an alternative to the combined impact of the quality of the CBP and the commitment and local presence of the EfD initiative. However, managing the interface with these other networks is important, as is being capable of differentiating the value of the CBP and EfD initiative to potential donors and research-funding bodies.
3. The EfD initiative and CBP are long-term projects and, whilst there has been great progress since inception, the research, staff and financial capacities of the centres remain vulnerable. A break in the financial commitment of Sida, or loss of key personnel at this point, remain arguably the greatest threats to the programs.

# Recommendations

Overall, we recommend that Sida keeps investing in both programs – they are doing essential work, are well managed, and are very good value for money. However, the following recommendations should be actioned in return.

## 1. Develop a promotional strategy and team to support fund raising and financial stability

The CBP and EfD network have been confirmed as high-quality initiatives with considerable potential. The research returns to investment are high, but the programs must market their merits to the international donor community more effectively. The newly proposed structures should facilitate external sources in funding research in this context, and this is an important development. However, the evaluation found that the secretariat team, whilst capable, may lack the excess capacity and experience to chase such international funds. The secretariat is clearly aware of this need, and showed initiative in appointing Maria Damon to identify potential opportunities in this context. Ultimately high-quality professional material must be developed which can be used to support the pitch to appropriate international funding bodies for resources and, thereafter, set a timeline and team in place for making the necessary calls and visits. The attraction of new donors will also require a streamlined reporting mechanism, as noted in a later recommendation.

In respect of international donors, there are a number of entities associated and internal to the EfD initiative which have substantial experience, success and connections in regard to other funding sources. The Stockholm Resilience Centre, for example, has had notable success in funding diversification. Similarly, even within the EfD initiative, certain groups, for example, EfD-CA or EfD-SA, have had promising success in terms of landing major research funds and, indeed, tapping into international foundations, for example, the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) or the American Tinker Foundation Incorporated (TFI). Indeed, Sida itself may also be in a position to engage and support in the brokering process of multi-donor arrangements for the future of the EfD initiative. This evaluation further recommends a formal mapping process of potential donors and funding sources by the Secretariat, fully exploiting all existing contacts and connections to progress discussions. The prospective donors should only be approached when the new structure, reporting systems, research focus and promotional strategy recommendations have been addressed. Initiatives could include: developing a consortium of donors for specific activities, perhaps related to the achievement of climate policy or other strategic goals; developing and implementing a coursework Master's that is of a scale and scope that generates net income, linked perhaps to the development of the emerging distance-learning platform.

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## 2. Continue planning for the expansion of EfD to other regions/participants and continue to facilitate ‘bottom up’ leadership of research and policy outreach, but provide some top down ‘steering’ to better relate the work to the emerging global agendas, especially as regards climate change and ecosystems

It is recommended that the EfD network is gradually expanded. In pursuit of this goal, a transitional plan should be developed and adopted which plans how to sustain engagement with all centres as they transition from ‘developing stage’ funded centres with core support to ‘established collaborative’ centres in the broader group. In essence, a budget plan is required which identifies how funding will be allocated from the established centres to the nascent nodes of the growing network over time. It is recommended that all centres remain in a position to compete for policy research funds over time – though in an increasingly open and competitive manner. At present, each centre bids for its own ‘pot’ of research funds and these are equally spread amongst centres. In the future, the ‘guaranteed pot’ of research funds per centre should be removed for established centres with some funds diverted to a ‘guaranteed pot’ for new centres and the remainder going to a general competitive funding pot.

The transition plan must take account of the fact that there is variation between centres in terms of financial strength and independence at this stage, as well as academic and policy performance. However, care is required not to damage or sever existing financial support links prematurely. For example, China is a reasonably well-resourced and academically-strong unit and questions may arise as to the need for continued Sida funding of such a centre. However, in this case, the centre has helped develop an important environmental economics research program in a location where the policy impacts and influence may be particularly significant. Furthermore, the evaluators believe that China, as an example, offers clear strategic value in the development of a global development network, particularly with respect to the climate research agenda. Caution is advised, therefore, with regard to how engagement with more prosperous centres is managed so as to avoid losing crucial network assets.

In this regard, whilst we understand the financial constraints facing Sida, we would advise that the overall budget should, in fact, be increased in so far as possible to facilitate the transition to a larger network. To support this request, the EfD secretariat should prepare financial scenario plans illustrating how the total funding requirements and funding allocations are expected to change over the next ten years in aggregate, and by centre, as part of their expansion plan.

This expansion plan must also incorporate consideration of the CBP development and acknowledge Sida prioritisation of development aid to specific countries over others. This Sida prioritisation may influence the origin of new students that would be available for linking to prospective centres. It will, therefore, be important to consider how the CBP, Sida priorities and timelines for development of new capacity align with the ambitions to establish new centres and populate them with graduates.

## Human Capital Impact



With regard to introducing other partner centres to the network, but without formal core support financing (e.g. Chile, RFF), such arrangements should be continued as appropriate. A note of caution is offered though with regard to simply adding names to the network. The reasons for including a new partner, and the expected level and form of engagement, need to be discussed and agreed to avoid weakening the brand and diluting the core of the initiative through the inclusion of passive partners who contribute little. Similarly, consideration must be given to the added workload on the secretariat from a growing network, irrespective of the funding requirements of the centres themselves.

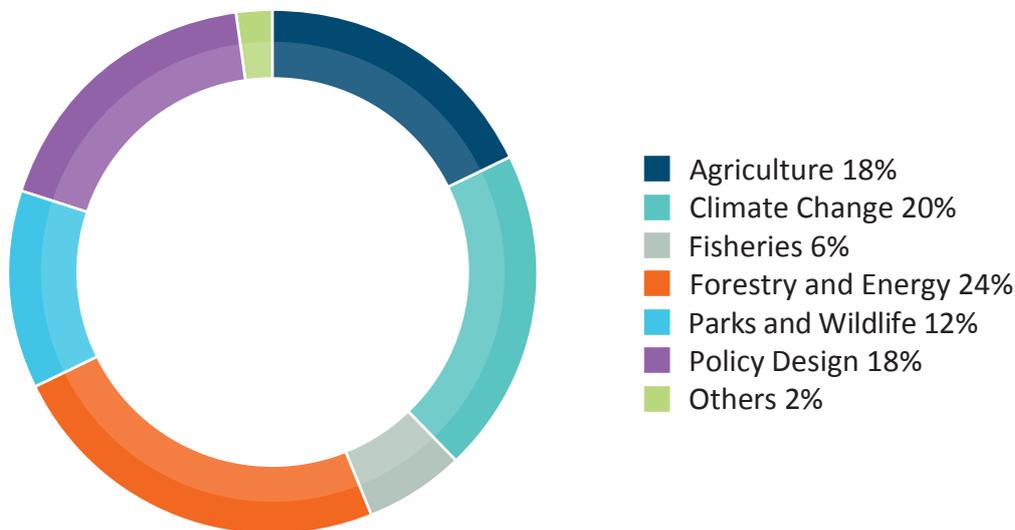
### 3. Pursue academic hosting for EfD centres but cultivate and sustain policy linkages

The evaluation finds that a university hosting arrangement is perhaps best suited to the academic and educational training aspects of the EfD centres and, therefore, should ultimately be pursued in each host country where such appropriate opportunities arise. That said, policy institutes offer a valuable interface with policy development and application, and existing connections should be carefully transferred into a policy advisory board structure as part of the change.

## 4. Review the research focus for the EfD Network

In terms of specific topics, there are numerous opportunities where the skillsets and local connections of the EfD initiative can thrive. The EfD research process allows for a good balance between locally-determined priorities and international guidance over approach and focus. In 2013, the balance of themes across EfD funded projects in the centres shows attention to all the major themes with a slight leaning towards agriculture, forestry and climate change, that is understandable given the resource mix and economic profiles in the centre countries. Maintaining some thematic balance in research topics is recommended but we would not advise major interference with the recently revised approach to project selection. Over the period from 2011 to 2013, the 94 funded research projects are well distributed across the themes.

### 2011-2013 Research Projects (94) by Theme



There is a question though as to where the EfD initiative wishes to balance the focus of the centres between national challenges and local development issues, or broader cohesive research network topics. In brief, there is the opportunity for a centre to work on national agenda topics that are nationally and internationally relevant and to draw on experience and expertise from the broader network. However, there is a different focus required if the initiative is intending to exploit fully the potential of network-level research projects, for example, focused on climate adaptation, ecosystem services. We recommend that the secretariat considers the EfD locations and capacities and design a network-level project which showcases what the EfD network can offer. This is not an either/or situation, but further clarity with regard to the research vision and resource use over time is needed.

At the other end of that spectrum, we recommend trialling shorter, smaller funded-research pieces with a view to enabling more rapid and focused research by the centres on 'hot topics'. In general, the EfD projects supported are longer-term projects (e.g. 3 to 4 years) which offer budget stability for some researchers and centres. However, a case can also be made to support shorter-term research pieces that directly and quickly respond to the needs of the policy system. Once again, this is not an either/or situation. Whilst the longer projects offer stability and arguably a more progressive means of developing researcher confidence and expertise, in time, senior researchers should be capable of shorter-term analyses on a smaller scale.

Consideration should be given to allocating a moderate share of the budget to some test cases whereby a short timeframe research project is awarded (e.g. 3-12 months). This would also require an interim dynamic response from the Research Committee or some alternate approach to be put in place for rapid evaluation and response. The moderate risk is that the Research Committee becomes inundated with requests to conduct small, short local-research projects which do not undergo the same rigorous peer-review as the current larger projects.

## 5. Encourage the pursuit of greater financial efficiency with research projects at the centres

In the context of deriving more for less for invested funds, it is useful to provide all appropriate incentives to encourage savings amongst the centres. Whilst the project funding is modest and well managed, there may be further opportunity to formally incentivise dynamic cost savings in the policy research projects. Generally, once an award has been made, the incentive is to spend all allocated funds. Whilst this approach is common within international funding (for example, EU Horizon 2020) arrangements, dynamic savings can be encouraged by formally allowing savings to be rolled-over to other mission-relevant research. One challenge is to ensure that this does not lead to 'bid inflation', though this remains unlikely if the ultimate savings remain tracked for use in further EfD-relevant research. The evaluation recommends a review of financing arrangements whereby individual project managers can be further incentivised to identify dynamic cost savings on a given project and, thereafter, roll these funds into another relevant research activity.

## 6. Consider some moderate educational engagement between Beijer and the PhD program

The Beijer Institute and EEU are two groups that are clearly passionate and effective in regard to their respective missions. Whilst there is clearly some relevance between the teaching and training offered by the two groups, both are already operating independently and effectively and, as such, we would urge caution with regard to any aggressive program changes on either side. This approach would seem also to be the preference of both the Beijer Institute and EEU teams interviewed. A further educational engagement could plausibly see a shared course element of between two and four weeks being accommodated in the 2nd year of the PhD program at EEU. A specialisation offering could then be returned from the environmental economics unit at EEU to the Beijer Institute. The overall objective being to broaden the awareness and educational horizons of the students to some positive effect whilst recognising the distinctions between the two groups. This may also offer the opportunity to trial a distance learning accreditation process for a select group on both sides, in line with the recommendation regarding development of a distance-learning strategy.

## 7. Foster a supportive engagement between SRC, Beijer and the EfD

Beyond the educational engagement, it seemed clear that the Beijer, SRC and EEU teams could also support each other in additional ways. It was noted that the SRC, for example, has been quite successful with securing diverse sponsorship. The EEU may be in a position to learn from their approach and could certainly benefit from their connections. One angle may be to explore opportunities for a formal research link-up between SRC and the EfD network, whereby the EfD leverages the international network of competent research centres to support joint execution of a specific research objective with the SRC that is of interest to existing SRC donors.

The outcomes of a Sida-FORSK supported report led by Thomas Elmqvist and Thomas Sterner (due October 2014) will be relevant in this context. The report will set out options, inter alia, for evolving the Environmental Economics for Sustainable Development agenda for 2016-2020, with consideration and description of how mutually beneficial levels of increased integration can be incorporated into future research strategies.

## 8. Sustain the PhD program path but investigate selected innovations and changes

As of 2012 the PhD program has formally included Climate in the title. Climate-relevant research and training adds a valuable specialisation to the environmental economics discipline. It also sets the program apart from any course currently available in Africa, for example. The PhD also includes a course-sharing collaboration with the Chalmers University, allowing a bilateral exchange of technological and economic training to be offered to both sides. Various individual points on the PhD program where questions were raised during the evaluation are outlined below.

- There has been some initiative shown with regard to piloting remote access to courses via video. The quality of this material and production is of a good standard. Far more can be done to develop this area, and this point is developed in a later recommendation.
- With regard to the focus of the PhD program, it is worth noting that the quality and rigour of the training received is itself a key deliverable. The research skills developed to a high standard in the PhD allow excellent work on a variety of topics ex post.
- The PhD is moving to a concise format of 3 core papers (one a 'job market' paper). This is to allow the students more time to develop their thoughts on the work and to refine skillsets. There is little loss in seeing students focus on top-quality academic outputs as this training will allow them to progress to be better teachers and respected policy analysts, in time, as their skillsets are applied to other tasks and topics. In essence, they are embedding good research training by pushing for top-quality publishing.
- Consider alteration of the PhD intake cycle to allow for a greater pool of quality candidates. The PhD program currently has an intake of students every other year. This is linked, inter alia, to organisational structures and capacity constraints at the University. However, the absence of an annual intake may have an adverse effect on the available pool of quality candidates for selection. Responses from external and internal interviews at EEU suggest that, whilst the initial intakes were of exceptional quality, the more recent intakes have been of a level more comparable with the general PhD intake. We believe that if there are 6 places available under the supported PhD program every 2 years, then perhaps 2 of these places should be offered in the off year, with a deferred start date. This will maintain the alternate intake approach but will also allow candidates who are 'out-of-sync' with the process to apply for the program, obtain a decision, and make appropriate plans for their future.
- Consider offering 'crash courses' to new PhD students. The PhD program course outline details a thorough and heavy load of non-elective courses, elective specialisations, and other seminars and discussion groups. Whilst the success rate of the program is exceptionally high, feedback from some students and lecturers suggest that, in some cases, the offering of a short 'crash course' in specific topics (for example, econometrics) could smooth the transition from a Master's level degree to such a challenging PhD program.

## 9. Continue to develop the accessibility to knowledge for education and prepare a discussion document on distance learning

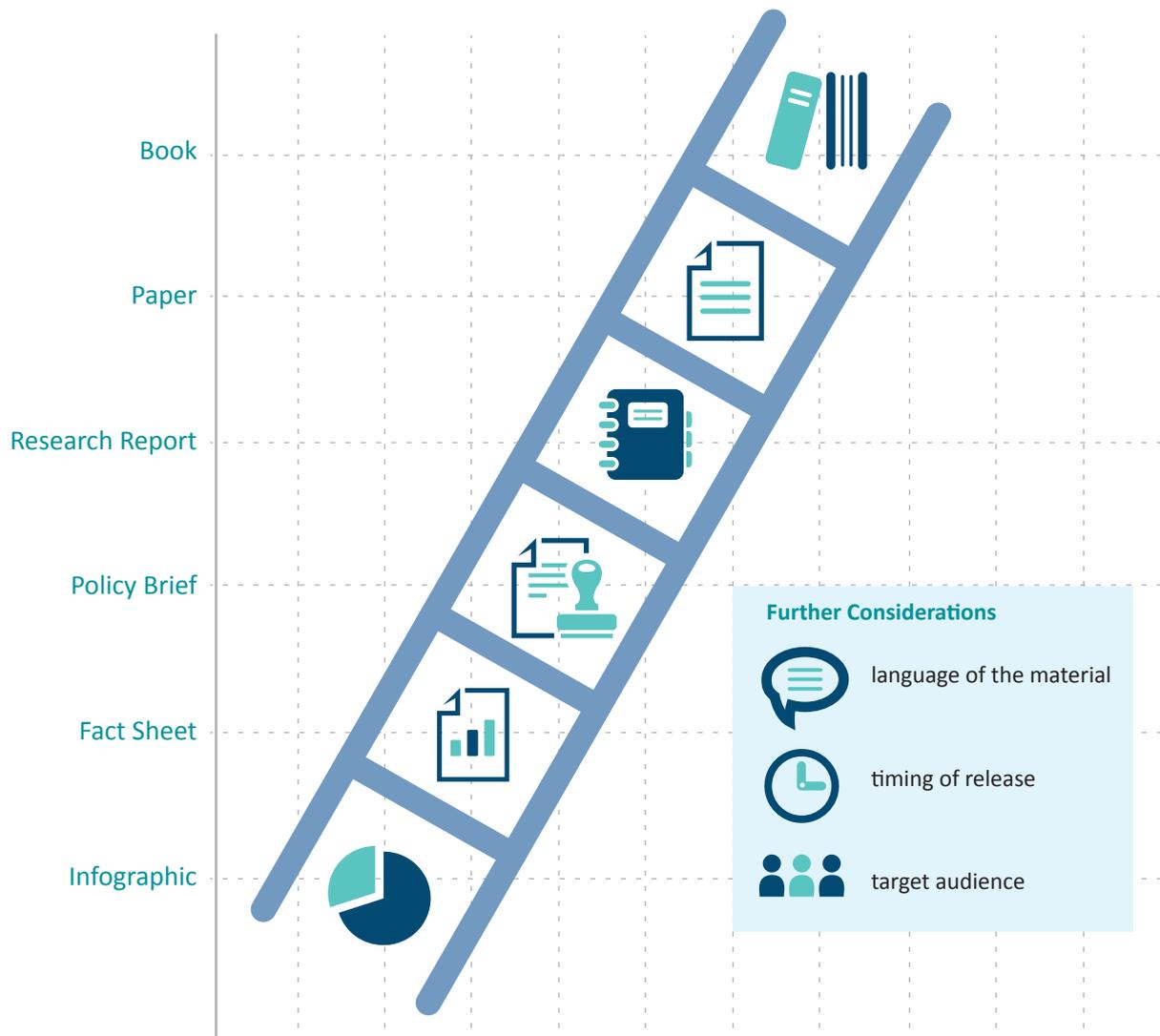
International initiatives to promote access to knowledge for education have gained great traction in recent years. The [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org) initiative has attracted over 6.5m users with a vision to empower people with education to improve their lives and the communities in which they live. Whilst such distance learning options cannot replace the quality and engagement of the PhD program, they do offer a mechanism by which the program may reach more people in a persistent, flexible manner, for example, offering specialist courses for policy stakeholders and aspiring students. EEU has shown good initiative in this area with specific specialisation lectures being recorded in high quality for release via YouTube and the EfD site. This is a dynamic area internationally and it is important that EEU plan their strategy with regard to distance learning under future agreements. The strategy should incorporate consideration of questions, such as accreditation and course sharing, as well as seeking to understand and address the identified issue of certain lecturers not wishing to have their courses made available. The EfD centres could be in a position to provide local tutoring support to these distance learning courses offered by the EEU at UoG, thereby enhancing the quality of the educational experience and moving closer to replicating a standard in-house program. Responsibility to consider and advance this area should be given to a nominated member of the secretariat or outsourced for formal reporting. Should the system ultimately progress to a live streaming approach with full class interaction, the limited gap in time zones with Africa at least would be an advantage.

## 10. Continue to foster interaction between EfD centres and with the policy community

There is evidence of multi-centre cooperation (e.g. national park pricing between Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa, or the coastal conservation project between South Africa, Central America and Tanzania) and this is encouraging to see. However, the secretariat may be in a position to develop a special strategic project to engage all the centres in a common cause in a future phase.

Also, with regard to regional policy interactions, our perception was that more work could be done to win over policymakers to the merits of the work. The absence of an established base that is primed to incorporate and utilise the capacity developed through the capacity-building side of this program is the great risk. The EfD-T policy advisory board is a good model that should be replicated in some format across all centres for their work. In brief, identify influential and relevant stakeholders in policymaking and engage them on a biannual basis with regard to ongoing and planned work. An initial approach may be to undertake some short research work of interest to them and engage them in a workshop presentation. An important part of this process is that all centres must work on communicating the value and relevance of high quality research and standards within their fields of operation. The policy systems, government research agencies, and so on must appreciate the value of this internationally peer-reviewed level of academic rigour and, thereafter, demand it from local policy researchers.

## Information Ladder



## 11. Develop an improved system for tracking graduates

To date, the secretariat has done an excellent job in tracking the career path and influence of their PhD graduates. However, this is currently facilitated by a large number remaining in direct contact with the EfD network, and having close working relationships. Over time, this will become more challenging and it is recommended that the secretariat develops an enhanced EfD affiliation listing that is connected with the EfD website. Each member should be sent an automated annual electronic reminder to update any new or different information. Graduates could indicate no changes or make edits as appropriate. However, if no response is registered at all, then a notice would be automatically sent to the secretariat after one month. A failure to respond could, thereafter, trigger a personalised intervention by the secretariat to keep track of the individual. A LinkedIn or other appropriate professional networking option should also be added to all individual profiles.

## 12. Require coherent and consistent reporting from all centres to a prescribed template

There is a considerable volume of data relating to the EfD initiative and CBP. These data are generated at different centres by different people and many key indicators are then synthesised by the secretariat for use in its own reporting. The most recent synthesis of data was provided to the evaluation team as the “EfD in numbers 2007-2013” excel file. The intention of this file, to gather key data over an extended time series, is commendable but the execution can be improved significantly. Our principal concerns relate to the potential variation in data generation methodologies across centres and over time. The secretariat could not confirm that a common methodology had been applied and this is something which needs to be addressed and, ideally, retrospectively applied to historical data. The absence of reliable comparable indicator data will impair the ability of the EfD initiative to market itself internationally and to convince donors of progress. Two major issues to address are as follows:

- Funding won by the centres should be reported only as the share which is attributable to the centre budget (i.e. not partner shares or subcontractors). This may include data collection, personnel, travel, consumables etc. Ultimately, rules can be set to prescribe the approach and there is no valid reason why a centre does not report in this basic level of detail. Variations in this context can have a substantial impact on the reported level of Sida-funding dependence.
- What constitutes membership of an EfD centre should be clarified so that FTEs can be estimated. A common approach to defining EfD staff, associates or ‘others’ is extremely important in the context of developing coherent metrics of progress and in attributing outputs and performance indicators fairly across the EfD network.

## 13. Adopt compact indicators as part of the transition to a manageable global network

The PhD capacity-building program and the EfD network will continue to grow and develop over time. The strength of the CBP program has been confirmed in this evaluation, and the potential for the EfD network to develop into a significant global network has been acknowledged. However, as part of such growth and transition, it is important that the management of the network are prepared for the change in their own management approach. Regular monitoring is important, however, with increased scale would come a requirement to adopt both meaningful and manageable indicators. A plan should be drawn up, drawing on aspects of this evaluation, to indicate how progress and performance indicators would be managed into the future. As the network grows, and alumni begin to spread through the policy and university systems, it will become increasingly challenging to track and report the ‘impact’ that the initiatives are having. Similarly, monitoring the activities and performance of individuals and individual centres will become more difficult. However, being able to communicate these stories in a coherent and easily-understood fashion will give the network a considerable advantage in seeking additional sources of funding. Both Sida and the EEU should discuss appropriate and measureable metrics for monitoring and managing success and put in place the necessary systems. As part of this process, consider which indicators will be most helpful in promoting the network to potential donors. Some recommendations for key indicators are presented below – in all cases clear and structured excel (or similar) files should be prepared to store and manage records over time. These should not be done simply on an ad-hoc basis from time to time.

We acknowledge that some of these are already in place or partially in place:

- Time Series of PhDs trained – Origin – Current Location – Rank/Position
- Time Series of Course Participants – Origin
- Time Series of Course Evaluations Metrics – Lecturing, Materials, Relevance, Overall
- Sample of best esteem indicators for centre personnel
- Samples of professionally-drafted policy-impact stories
- Infographics (similar to those included in this evaluation)
- Time series of donors (and donor list) and diversification of funding
- Time series of number of core staff and core staff plus associates by centre over time
- Time series of peer-reviewed publications by theme over time
- Time series of projects by theme
- Number of partnered projects (between centres or externals)
- Number of professionals who received training from an EfD centre/staff member
- Number of students who received training by an EfD centre/staff member
- EfD share of total centre budget and co-funding from other sources
- Obtain evidence with regard to policy impact – whilst ex post analysis may involve too much time and cost, letters of commendation from policymakers using the research would be valuable evidence.

## 14. Sustain progress on the gender equality plan

The management of the CBP offers no cause for concern with regard to gender, and the working environment is supportive and well-balanced. With regard to staffing, meritocratic appointments are vital. The goal is not to achieve a balance of gender but rather to eliminate any discrimination if it exists, and to foster and encourage the development and progression of quality graduates, male and female, in a setting of equal opportunity.



EFD Director Gunnar Köhlin together with doctoral students

The gender equality plan is well-assembled and concise. However, care must be taken to ensure the document is not merely shelved as a ‘box-ticking’ exercise. With regard to Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia, progress should be monitored over time to see if possible barriers to the appointment of female quality staff can be addressed. Furthermore, as part of the research committee process, gender should remain a consideration, where relevant, in research topics.

### 15. Have a network-wide discussion of the approach to Sida-connected pay and remuneration

The EfD initiative takes a dynamic approach to pay and remuneration arrangements in the various centres, in other words, the needs of specific centres with regard to operating and conducting research are acknowledged and where possible addressed. This can mean that, in one location, lower salaries of core staff might be topped-up whereas, in another, funds may be used to hire research assistants or cover research expenses. This approach makes sense given the varied circumstances and stages of development at which the centres operate. However, over time, in a larger networked organisation, multiple ad-hoc agreements may generate confusion and distrust within the wider network and may give rise to suspicions of poorly-regulated financial controls from the perspective of potential external donors. A discussion is required across the network, and with Sida, as to what guiding principles (as opposed to rules) will apply to the Sida-funded activities.

### 16. Investigate adjunct status (or similar) to afford centres access to online journals via UoG

A case could, perhaps, be made to offer EfD researchers at partner centres an adjunct status at UoG (or some comparable arrangement) which facilitates legitimate access to online journals via the University of Gothenburg. Care is required in both investigating and implementing such a scheme, however, the evaluators are aware of similar approaches being made in other universities.



Ethiopian women carrying their share of firewood from the community forest

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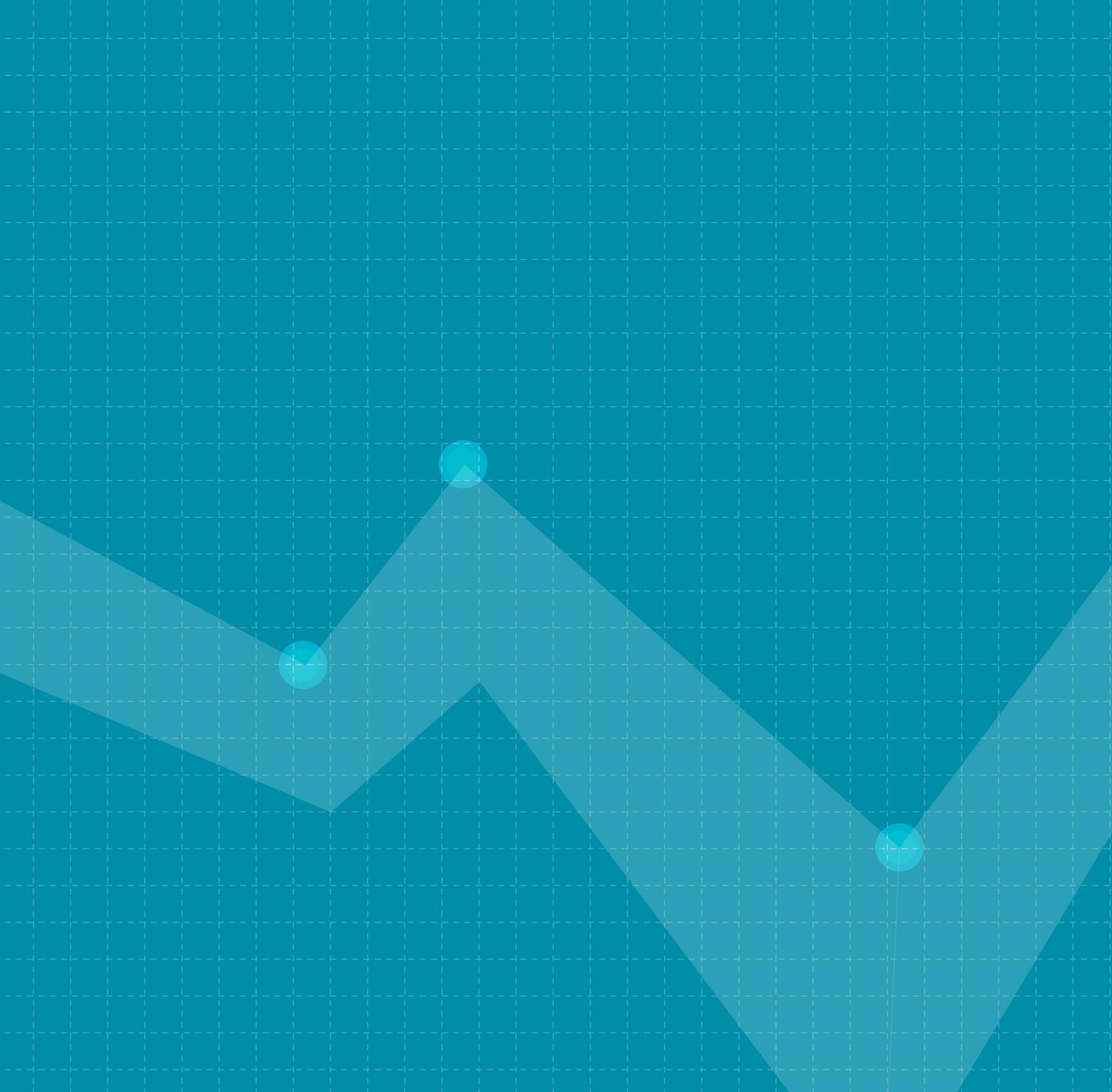
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