

Endowments for think tanks in developing countries: what role for private foundations and official donors?

High-level Seminar, OECD Headquarters, Paris, 28 April 2008

Seminar Objective

Bring together senior officials from official donor agencies and private foundations to discuss the creation of co-funded permanent endowments to provide permanent financial support to think tanks from developing countries working on fiscal policy monitoring and improvement.

Expected Outcomes

- In-depth reflection on the viability of creating co-funded permanent endowments for developing countries think tanks working on fiscal policy monitoring and improvement.
- Creation of a reflection group to work on a fully detailed proposal to be presented at a high-level conference in early 2009.

The Proposal

Creation of a permanent endowment of €100 million funded by official donor agencies and private foundations. The permanent endowment should allow for a permanent annual revenue of approx. €5 million that could fully fund the activity of think tanks working on fiscal issues in a selected country in each of these 4 world regions: Africa, Asia, East Europe, and Latin America (approx. €1,25 million each).

Key Elements for Discussion

On Think Tanks

- What is the value-added of think tanks in promoting better public policies and good governance?
- What are local think tanks doing to promote better public policies in developing countries?
- How can donors and foundations better support them to carry out their activities?

On Official Donors / Private Foundations Partnerships

- What can donors and foundations gain from working together?
- What are donors and foundations doing to coordinate actions and foster aid impact?
- What are the best vehicles for official donors / public foundations collaboration?

On Endowments

- Can permanent endowments provide a ground for further donor-foundation collaboration?
- What are the challenges, pros and cons of creating endowments to support think tanks?
 - Type: Nature of the endowment, location, size, contributions, investments, allocation
 - Management: Who, administrative costs
 - Governance: Who, administrative costs
- Who should be the beneficiaries?: Selection, priority countries
- Monitoring and assessment of the results

On Fiscal Policy

- Why should fiscal policy be a priority for official donors and private foundations?
- What are local think tanks doing to promote better fiscal policies in developing countries?
- Can permanent endowments help support independent, local research on fiscal policy?