

IDRC Call- "Quality of research and allocation of research funds in the Global South"

Project: The Evaluation of Research in Change: Inclusion in Scientific Systems and Mission-Oriented Projects in Global South Research Funding Initiatives. Reform quality assessment through progressive and well-founded methodologies

Institution: Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), through the Latin American Forum for Research Evaluation (FOLEC)

Project duration: from December 2020 to May 2022

Executive abstract

Purposes

This project aims to understand how various approaches and methodologies for assessing research quality affect the way research funds are allocated in the Global South.

Analyze how the quality of research proposals for funding could be assessed to better adapt to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), global "big challenges" and critical situations, particularly in the context and socio-economic imperatives of the Global South.

Explore how progressive and situated research evaluation can facilitate funding schemes and decisions that promote more inclusive research systems through the participation of traditionally excluded groups and regions and/ or institutions with less established research capacities.

Goals

Analyze a variety of initiatives by national science and technology councils / funding agencies in lower-middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, highlighting innovative principles, tools and best practices related to inclusion in scientific systems (with regarding the promotion of the participation of traditionally excluded groups such as women, early career researchers, indigenous peoples and / or Afro-descendants in the region) and the direction of research funds oriented to sustainable development goals (ODS), "missions/ problem" and / or "big challenges" through progressive and situated research evaluation methodologies.

The study focuses on the programs / calls of national science and technology councils and /or research agencies/universities in a selection of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica) and Asia (Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India).

Methodology

The research focuses on a qualitative approach, based on qualitative and quantitative empirical data that allow us to understand the ways in which research projects are evaluated for funding. As part of a flexible design, the study involves various research instances deployed at different times.

The first consists of a critical review of the most recent studies on research evaluation; inclusivity in scientific systems, mission-oriented research, and assessment methodologies from the perspective of the Global South. Second, the project has three different stages associated with field work, namely:

i) identification of instruments to promote research (calls for competitive funds), particularly those funds that stimulate research aimed at addressing the problems of social and economic development in countries (production, public policy, health, environmental problems, energy, social exclusion, poverty, etc.);

ii) survey of the forms of evaluation of these competitive funds for the allocation of resources to research aimed at addressing these problems;

iii) multiple case study to deepen the forms and practices of evaluation in a more qualitative perspective, with the purpose of potentially contributing to comparative research on scientific systems and research evaluation in the Global South.

In this sense, the project seeks to capture a complex and diversified map of social and local relevance of the research, through the application of methodologies that place decision makers, researchers, and users of the research results at the center of the stage.

Activities and results

During the course of the project, a transparent online platform will be developed, published and updated that includes an open and accessible database with the case studies, the international survey, the interviews and the knowledge products available to potential users. CLACSO's extended experience in the dissemination of knowledge as part of the research process together with the mobilization of key non-academic actors will be a key contribution to the project. Finally, the best practices will be identified and recommendations will be formulated, which will be published as two short discussion documents prepared before the regional consultations for discussion in that framework, along with an open access digital academic publication that recovers the different contributions of the draft.

Keywords: oriented research, assessment; methodologies, inclusion, Global South.

Work team

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Partner institution:

- Center of Policy Research, Indian Institute of Science, India.

Collaborating institutions

- Sectoral Commission for Scientific Research (CSIC) of UDELAR, Uruguay.
- Planning Secretariat, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mincyt), Argentina.
- Directorate of Knowledge Generation, Minciencias, Colombia.
- CoLaV, Center for Social and Human Research of the University of Antioquia, Colombia.
- Planning Directorate, CONACyT, Mexico.
- Subdirectorate of Networks, Strategy and Knowledge Management, National Research and Development Agency, Anid, Chile.
- Global Research Council (GRC)
- International Science Council (ISC)