

Capacity Needs Assessment for HSPR in RESYST

The questions on pages 2 to 4 should be answered by the senior researchers of the RESYST partners and affiliates. This could be done through;

- 1) A face to face discussion with the RESYST CEO or Research Director(s) – the CEO/RD will write up the notes to share with the senior researchers for correction/clarification.
- 2) A Skype call with the CEO – we would suggest that the senior researchers work through the questions together before the call. Depending on time, one option could be that the senior researchers write notes on responses and share with the CEO in advance of the call and then clarify/add to notes through discussion on the call. The CEO would then revise the notes and send to the group to review to be sure appropriate understanding is captured. The other option is that the CEO will develop the notes from the call and share with the group for review.
- 3) Self reflection, and then prepare notes / write-up to share with the CEO to review.

When answering the questions please focus on the HSPR group and not on the whole department or organisation in which the HSPR group sits unless it is important to refer to this level – but please be clear about which level you are referring to.

When considering questions please group questions together to answer if appropriate (rather than answering each individually if not appropriate).

The second part of this document includes a summary of what we said we would like to address in the capacity building section of the proposal to DFID. Can you tell us what are your priorities from the list – and priorities that could be addressed through RESYST? Are there other things that a collective like RESYST can do to meet capacity for junior researchers / senior researchers / admin and finance staff? How can we address some of these priorities through the opportunities we have in RESYST, such as events or activities at annual meetings?

The feedback can be in the form of bullet pointed notes – this doesn't need a response in fully constructed prose. But it should be in a form that can be read and used by the Capacity Development Coordination Group to summarise and prepare a proposal to discuss at the Annual Meeting (week of September 19th).

This work should be completed by Wednesday September 7th to give the Capacity Development Coordination Group time to digest the responses before the Annual Meeting.

Questions for research leaders (senior staff) – to be answered by each research leader individually

Mentoring research and support staff

- How many people are you the line manager for? How many of these are research staff and how many are support staff?
- Do you supervise all these staff? What sort of supervision do you provide?
- Do you have a system of staff appraisals? If no, is this a problem? What are the challenges to developing an appraisal system?
- Have you had training in conducting staff appraisals?
- Do you mentor any staff? If yes give details. Are you the line manager for the staff you mentor?
- Have you received any training in mentoring?
- Do you have a mentor or any other system of getting support for yourself? If yes, please give details. If not, would you be interested in having a mentor?
- Is there a clear career pathway for HSPR research and support staff? If yes, please describe.

Grantsmanship

- What is your experience, and that of your staff, in writing grants?
- How many grants have you and your staff applied for in the last two years? How many have you obtained? Where were they from, for how much and for how long?
- What were the challenges to writing the grant application, and the challenges for the different people in the organisation i.e. more junior researchers?
- Did you write the grant in collaboration with another researcher(s)? Were they from your group or another organisation?
- Have you had any training and/or mentoring in writing a grant application? If yes, please describe.
- Do you have support staff who help develop the budget for grant proposals?

Research management

- How much of the HSPR group's funding is external (i.e. soft money / grants) and internal (core)? Please describe the group's funding sources?
- Please indicate how many grants the group has at the moment, the value and duration of each grant and the funding source.
- How many grants does your group have that you are involved in personally?
- Please describe the workload involved in managing the grants.
- How many of the staff within the group (research and support) are funded from grants i.e. soft money versus core funding?
- How difficult is it to manage the different requirements and conditions of the different funders? Such as issues of covering maternity leave, sabbatical leave, etc.
- What are the key challenges in securing sustained funding for the group?
- Given the funding that you have, what are challenges you have for sustaining research activities?
- How involved are you in the financial management of research grants? Do you have support staff to conduct most areas of financial management where you only need to provide direction and overview – or are you doing most of the financial management yourself?
- Are there support staff to do the accounting and financial reporting? Are they trained in this field?
- Are there support staff to develop invoices and make payments?
- Are you involved in developing contracts or do you have support staff that are able to do this?
- Is there a calendar of events to know when reports and invoices need to be produced by?
- Is there a calendar of events to know when project deliverables need to be produced by to manage the timely delivery of research outputs?
- Do you have regular meetings or communication with support staff to keep up to date with research management issues and project progress?

- Do you have procedural guidelines developed so that support staff know what they should do e.g. financial procedural guidelines?
- Is there a clearly defined and documented process for approving research grant contracts and amendments?

General support to the HSPR group

- How many support staff are there for the HSPR group? Do they all sit within the HSPR group or are some external to the group? Describe their roles, training and experience.
- For support staff external to the HSPR group – are they easy to access? Where do they sit?
- Is the team big enough? Does it take on all tasks it could? Does it provide support in a timely manner? What are the constraints on expanding the team? Are they organisational, financial? Are some of those constraints things that we could address? What are the challenges of the support staff?
- Do support staff have job descriptions? Are staff roles and responsibilities formally defined and documented?
- Does the organisation and HSPR group use computerised systems for financial and project record keeping which are regularly backed up on to the server or external hard drive?

Research journal access and IT resources

- Do research and support staff have access to a computer, the internet and a printer? Do staff have to share computers? Is there high speed broadband internet? How easy is it to download scientific papers?
- Is there access to the appropriate journals in your field? Can you access these through your organisation through HINARI?
- Have all research and support staff been trained in the software they need to use?
- Is there a trained and dependable IT support team on-site and available at all times? Where are the IT team located? How easy are they to access?

Research group development

- Do you have opportunities to discuss substantive research related issues (keeping up with the field, methodological developments) plan ahead as a group? E.g.
 - Are retreats held for the HSPR group? If yes, when, how often, who goes, what is covered?
 - Are HSPR seminars held for the group? If yes, how often? (i.e. presentations by researchers within the group to present their work)
 - Are journal clubs held? If yes, how often? (i.e. presentations on scientific articles – work not conducted by the group)
- Do research staff get to attend international conferences? If yes, how often? Where do the funds come from? Do staff find it useful? What do they feel they gain from attending conferences? How could the experience be made better?
- Do you have processes in place to support people to submit high quality scientific papers and grant proposals? E.g.
 - Is there an internal peer review group to review papers and proposals before they are sent off to the journal or funder?
 - Is training or mentorship provided for senior and junior researchers on how to write an abstract for presentation, and how to write, make and give a PowerPoint presentation, how to write a publication? Please give details.
 - When you receive external scientific papers to review do you involve junior and student researchers to take part in the review?
- Do you have guest faculty / visiting staff? What do they do? Is there an exchange program?

Publications

- How important is the production of publications for your research group (is your funding dependent on it?) and for research uptake?
- What are the challenges to writing papers?
- What efforts are made to increase publication quantity and quality?

- How many publications have you produced or been included as an author on the last two years? How many of these were you the first author? How many of these were you the last author? How many were in international journals, how many in national journals?
- How many junior researchers in the group have published in the last two years? How many publications per junior researcher? Were they first author on any of the publications?

Research Uptake / communications

- How do you ensure that your research, and that of the group, is relevant to policy needs?
- What do you understand by “relevant” to policy?
- Do you as a group think ahead in terms of dissemination of research and policy engagement? What does this entail?
- Do you have a communications manager / team within the HSPR group? If yes, please provide some details about the functions of this person/team. If no, is there a communications manager / team at the organisational level that you can work with? Please describe.
- If there is a communication officer / team - describe the kind of interactions they have with researchers to develop a collaboration for research uptake?
- What links do you and the HSPR group have with policy makers?
- Which venues and places do you engage with policy makers?
- Are you invited to attend MOH policy discussions? Do you take part in any policy making or influencing committees? Have you presented research evidence in these environments? Please describe.
- How often are you consulted by policy makers for research evidence?
- Are there opportunities to informally engage with policy makers?
- Do you feel you have the skills to network with policy makers?
- Have you had any training in writing for, and communicating with, policy makers?
- Is there any training provided in managing the media?
- Outside of RESYST, do other funders require research uptake activities? If yes, please describe.

Research users

- Have you conducted any activities to build the capacity of research users to understand and use HSPR?
- Do you provide formal training programme to MOH officials on HSPR?
- If you teach HSPR, what proportion of the students are from the MOH?
- Do you hold knowledge synthesis events between researchers and policymakers?

Teaching

- Does your group teach HSPR? If not, does your group have aspirations to teach HSPR? Do you contribute to other groups teaching HSPR? If yes,
- Where does the funding come from? How many students do you have per year?
- Do you teach to BSc, MSc and/or PhD level?
- What modules are offered for what degrees?
- Do you teach short courses and diploma level?
- How many teaching staff do you have? Who are the teachers, what do they teach?
- Are you interested in revisiting teaching curricula together with RESYST?
- What training opportunities are there in teaching skills?

Capacity building activities

- What capacity building activities are being held, or have been held in the last two years, or being planned for the HSPR group? This includes activities that are initiated within the group and also opportunities that exist outside of the group that the group are taking advantage of e.g. short courses. Please describe in detail.
- Are there any capacity building activities being conducted at the organisational level that are relevant to the HSPR group? Please describe in detail.

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