

7th South Asian Regional Meeting of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI-RM7)  
**Remaining Relevant in the Policy World**  
***Sustainability Challenges of Think Tanks***

*Organised by*  
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)  
BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)

5-7 February 2018  
BRAC-CDM Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Programme

DAY 1: Monday, 5 February 2018	
08:30 am – 09:00 am	Reception
09:00 am – 10:00 am <i>Venue:</i> Main Auditorium	<p><b><i>Setting the Scene</i></b> Objectives of this opening session are to contextualise RM7, overview of the programme and expected outcome</p> <p><i>Promo Video</i></p> <p><i>Welcome Remarks</i></p> <p><b>Fahmida Khatun</b> Executive Director Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p> <p><b>Sultan Hafeez Rahman</b> Executive Director BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)</p> <p><i>Speakers</i></p> <p><b>Andrew Hurst</b> Program Leader Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p> <p><i>Guest of Honour</i></p> <p><b>Sir Fazle Hasan Abed</b> Founder and Chairperson BRAC</p> <p><i>Remarks by the Chair</i></p> <p><b>Rehman Sobhan</b> Chairman Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p>
10:00 am – 10:30 am <i>Venue:</i> Staircase at the entrance to the field & auditorium foyer	Photo Session (Staircase at the entrance to the field) and Refreshments (Foyer)

10:30 am – 01:00 pm Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 1</b> <b><i>Stories of Change</i></b></p> <p><i>This session will take stock of TTI experience. Members of TTs will reflect on their Stories of Change.</i></p> <p>TTs are encouraged to bring a 3-minute video on TTI's contribution to their organisations.</p> <p>Discussions of individual country context and how this has created opportunities and challenges for new areas of work and funding. Here, we should focus on limitations, more than on successes of core support. That is, we would reflect on things that could be done better. It is also important that we collectively discuss where we could not put core support to best use.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Shekhar Shah</b> Director-General National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)</p>
01:00 pm – 02:00 pm Venue: Open Deck	Lunch
02:00 pm – 03:00 pm Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 2</b> <b><i>Sustainable Think Tank (STT) Project</i></b></p> <p>The STT Project aims to capture the experience and lessons from this unique core support programme of the TTI. The Project will document the status of social science research in South Asia with respect to its impact on think tanks and public policy discourse.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Ajaya Mani Dixit</b> Executive Director Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-Nepal (ISET-N)</p> <p><i>Reflections</i></p> <p><i>Three Executive Directors of TTI-funded organisations will share their TTI experiences.</i></p> <p><b>Khalida Ghaus</b> Managing Director Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)</p> <p><b>Udan Fernando</b> Executive Director Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)</p> <p><b>Yamini Aiyar</b> President and Chief Executive Centre for Policy Research (CPR)</p> <p>Core members of the STT Project will also be available for comments.</p> <p><i>Closing Remarks</i></p> <p><b>Sukhadeo Thorat</b> Professor Emeritus Jawaharlal Nehru University</p>

03:00 pm – 03:30 pm Venue: Open Deck	Refreshments
03:30 pm – 05:00 pm Venue: Open Deck	<p><b>Session 3</b> <b><i>Debriefing of the TTI Team by the Grantees</i></b></p> <p>This session will provide a meta-view about the TTI’s activities in South Asia. The session may also provide cross-regional TTI experience. Finally, TTI managers will reflect how they would have run the programme differently given another chance.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Sultan Hafeez Rahman</b> Executive Director BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)</p> <p><i>Conversation with:</i></p> <p><b>Andrew Hurst</b> Program Leader Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p> <p><b>Samar Verma</b> Senior Program Officer Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p> <p><b>Seema Bhatia-Panthaki</b> Senior Program Officer Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p> <p><b>Shannon Sutton</b> Senior Program Officer, Knowledge Translation Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p>
05:15 pm – 06:15 pm Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 4</b> <b><i>Remembering Saman Kelegama</i></b> <i>South Asia at Cross Roads: Role of Thought Leaders as Change Agents</i></p> <p><i>The session will begin with a video on Late Dr Saman Kelegama</i></p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Mustafizur Rahman</b> Distinguished Fellow Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p> <p><i>Opening Remarks</i></p> <p><b>Dushni Weerakoon</b> Executive Director Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)</p> <p><i>Remarks by the family members of Late Dr Saman Kelegama</i></p>

	<p><i>Reminiscence by TT Community</i> This will be an open platform for all colleagues to share memories of Saman Kelegama.</p> <p><i>Closing Reflections</i></p> <p><b>Rehman Sobhan</b> Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p>
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm <i>Venue:</i> Open Deck	BBQ Dinner

DAY 2: Tuesday, 6 February 2018	
08:30 am – 09:00 am Venue: Dining Hall 3/4/5	Welcome Tea/Coffee
09:00 am – 11:00 am Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 5</b> <b><i>Think Tanks in South Asia: The Last Jedi in SDG Challenge</i></b></p> <p>As a region, South Asia has promising prospects and dynamism to build a sustainable future for all. However, the current political stalemate in the region is holding back or not allowing the region to achieve its potential through regional cooperation.</p> <p>In this connection, this session is planned to explore whether the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an opportunity for the region to help transforming itself. The session will also examine whether the think tanks in South Asia can play a role in internalising and implementing the 2030 Agenda in a regional framework. It is envisaged that through this, the think tanks will contribute towards breaking the current political stalemate.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Debapriya Bhattacharya</b> Distinguished Fellow Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p>
11:00 am – 11:30 am Venue: Auditorium Foyer	Refreshments
11:30 am – 01:00 pm Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 6</b> <b><i>Ensuring Sustainability of Think Tanks: Finance and Beyond</i></b></p> <p>There will be <i>four</i> groups, each facilitated by <i>one</i> member of a TT. Each group will come up with a set of recommendations for sustainability in the assigned area through brainstorming. A minimum of <i>12 participants</i> should be in each group. Each group will select <i>one</i> facilitator and <i>one</i> presenter.</p> <p><i>Key questions for discussion</i></p> <p><i>Group 1: Quality of Research</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can research quality help achieve sustainability of southern TTs?</li> <li>• What type of institutionalisation and capacity building is needed for improving research quality?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 2: Effectiveness of Policy Outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can effectiveness of policy outreach contribute towards institutional sustainability?</li> <li>• What are the key elements for an improved policy engagement for southern TTs?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 3: Finance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the sources of finance be diversified by the southern TTs to ensure sustainability? What are the new/innovative sources of finance for southern TTs?</li> <li>• How does the global architecture for financing knowledge ecosystem have an impact on the quality of outputs of Southern TTs?</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Group 4: Human Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of investments (e.g. training, remuneration, career path) are required for ensuring sustainable skilled human resource in Southern TTs?</li> <li>• Should southern TTs look beyond national boundaries for skilled human resource?</li> </ul> <p>Presenters report back to the Plenary Session.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Dushni Weerakoon</b> Executive Director Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)</p> <p><i>Panellists</i></p> <p><b>Sanjay Kumar</b> Director Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)</p> <p><b>Nitin Chaubey</b> Head, Research Team Public Affairs Centre (PAC)</p> <p><b>Khondaker Golam Moazzem</b> Research Director Centre for Policy Dialogue</p> <p><b>Mahtab Uddin Ahmed</b> Managing Director &amp; Chief Executive Officer Robi Axiata Limited</p> <p><b>Michael Foley</b> Chief Executive Officer Grameenphone</p> <p><b>Jane Edmondson</b> Country Representative DFID Bangladesh</p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <p><i>Closing Remarks by the Moderator</i></p>
01:00 pm – 02:00 pm <i>Venue:</i> Open Deck	Lunch
02:00 pm – 03:30 pm <i>Venue:</i> Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 7</b> <b><i>Elements of a Post-TTI Strategy</i></b></p> <p>Once TTI ceases its support to think tanks, it is expected that the TTs will continue to collaborate among themselves in areas of common interests. For the sustainability of the TT cohort, participants will chart out various strategies for both organisational sustainability and the network's sustainability.</p> <p>This session is a continuation of Session 6. Session 7 takes a deeper look at financial sustainability – especially in a post-TTI scenario. Each TT is devising its own options in a post-TTI scenario. Clearly, these are confidential decisions</p>

	<p>and TTs may not want to discuss these in a public forum. However, this session attempts to have a general discussion regarding various possibilities.</p> <p>This session will also explore possibilities for collaboration among TTs. In theory, there is considerable merit for TTs to collaborate as knowledge partners. However, in practice, such partnerships are not common. Often TTs are competitors for grants. There are also political sensitivities towards decisions with regard to such collaboration.</p> <p>There will be <i>three</i> groups, each facilitated by <i>one</i> member of a TT. Each group will come up with a set of recommendations for sustainability in the assigned area through brainstorming. A minimum of <i>15 participants</i> should be in each group. Each group will select <i>one</i> facilitator and <i>one</i> presenter.</p> <p><i>Key questions for discussion</i></p> <p><i>Group 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the merits, demerits, and challenges of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Corpus grants from government</li> <li>○ CSR grants from business</li> <li>○ Consultancy assignments</li> <li>○ Integrate or affiliate with an academic institution</li> <li>○ Any other ideas?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Group 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a post-TTI scenario, can TTs work together in a mutually beneficial manner? What are the merits, demerits and challenges in such collaborations?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the merits, demerits, and challenges of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifying common research themes and conducting training and capacity building programmes. This could be in the areas of both research and organisational issues.</li> <li>○ Developing joint research proposals based on relative strengths to improve possibility of selection.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Anshu Bharadwaj</b> Executive Director Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)</p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <p><i>Closing Remarks by the Moderator</i></p>
03:30 pm – 04:00 pm Venue: Auditorium Foyer	Refreshments
04:00 pm – 06:00 pm	<b>Networking and Game (Badminton, carom, table tennis, etc.) Time</b>
07:00 pm – 10:00 pm Venue: Main Auditorium	<b>Cultural Programme and Dinner</b>

DAY 3: Wednesday, 7 February 2018	
08:30 am - 09:00 am Venue: Dining Hall 3/4/5	Welcome Tea/Coffee
09:00 am - 11:00 am Venue: Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 8</b> <b><i>Role of Southern TTs in Global Knowledge Ecosystem</i></b></p> <p>Southern TTs have always been marginalised in the global knowledge ecosystem. Being located in the south, TTs of the region are considered local while the northern TTs automatically assume the identity as “global” think tanks. Due to locational disadvantages, southern TTs remain outside the network even though many southern TTs have equal competence as the northern TTs, and the global agenda has relevance for southern countries.</p> <p>This session will bring out the challenges of southern TTs of being part of the global knowledge ecosystem and how to overcome such problems.</p> <p>The participants will be divided into <i>four</i> groups. These groups will brainstorm and come up with a set of recommendations on the theme. A minimum of <i>12 participants</i> should be in each group. Each group will select <i>one</i> facilitator and <i>one</i> presenter.</p> <p><i>Key questions for discussion</i></p> <p><i>Group 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the new features of the emerging global knowledge ecosystem which impact on the working of the Southern TTs?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which strategies should Southern TTs pursue to break the prevailing political economy that drives the global knowledge ecosystem?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key constraints facing the Southern TTs in evolving as powerful players (vis-à-vis northern TTs) in the global knowledge ecosystem?</li> </ul> <p><i>Group 4</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How South-South TT collaboration could leverage and support strengthened participation of Southern TTs in the global knowledge ecosystem?</li> </ul> <p>Presenters report back to the Plenary Session.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Mustafizur Rahman</b> Distinguished Fellow Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p> <p><i>Panellists</i></p> <p><b>Shannon Sutton</b> Senior Program Officer, Knowledge Translation Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p>



	<p><b>Sanghmitra Sheel Acharya</b> Director Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS)</p> <p><b>Abid Suleri</b> Executive Director Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) <i>(to be connected via Skype)</i></p> <p><b>Nisha Arunatilake</b> Director of Research Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)</p> <p><b>Subrat Das</b> Executive Director Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)</p> <p><b>Salai Ngun Lian Sang</b> Executive Director Centre for Development and Ethnic Studies (CDES)</p> <p><b>Min Zarni Lin</b> Deputy Research Director Centre for Economic and Social Development (CESD)</p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <p><i>Closing Remarks by the Moderator</i></p>
11:00 am – 11:30 am <i>Venue:</i> Auditorium Foyer	Refreshments
11:30 am – 01:00 pm <i>Venue:</i> Main Auditorium	<p><b>Session 9</b> <b><i>Do we meet again? Future of the South Asian Network</i></b></p> <p>Video on Visual Journey of TTI</p> <p>This session will discuss the sustainability of the network that has developed and strengthened during the TTI period. The TTI awardees should go home with a sense of purpose. This session will also summarise the takeaway from previous sessions during the three-day long meeting.</p> <p><i>Moderator</i></p> <p><b>Debapriya Bhattacharya</b> Distinguished Fellow Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)</p> <p><i>Panellists</i></p> <p><b>Andrew Hurst</b> Program Leader Think Tank Initiative (TTI) International Development Research Centre (IDRC)</p> <p><b>Sultan Hafeez Rahman</b> Executive Director BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)</p>

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12:30 pm - 01:30 pm <i>Venue:</i> Open Deck	Lunch
02:00 pm - 05:00 pm	<b>Cricket Match</b>
05:00 pm – 06:00 pm <i>Venue:</i> Open Deck	Refreshments