June 2018

Portfolio of Research: Towards a Body of Evidence and Policy Impact

The Economic Development and Institutions Research Programme completed 23 path-finding papers, launched 30 linked randomised control trials, 31 case studies and 3 in-depth country studies. They are building a body of evidence and insights into the impacts of institutional changes on economic growth and development. Policy engagement lies at the heart of this.

The Economic Development & Institutions (EDI) programme consists of four research activities that are fully underway. 23 **path-finding papers** set the scene and take stock of existing evidence on specific issues. They are available on our website here and papers will be published as a handbook in 2019.

We are designing an **institutional diagnostic tool** that will permit policy-makers to identify weak institutional areas that constrain development and appropriate directions for reform. This work is nearing completion in **Tanzania**, with a final country diagnostic expected to be published on the EDI website in September 2018 (see overview here). In **Benin**, a survey has been completed and authors have been selected to write in-depth thematic studies (see overview here). In June 2018, we announced the launch of the third study in **Bangladesh** together with our partner SANEM (South Asian Network of Economic Modelling). EDI will examine an additional two countries over the next two years.

Linked randomised control trials (RCTs) seek to provide robust evidence on the effectiveness of different levers for change. 30 projects (14 full-scale and 16 pilot RCTs) were selected under two requests for proposals. An overview of the first request for proposal projects is available here and a summary of the second competition here. They are taking place in 24 different countries with a focus on South Asia, East Africa and West Africa. We are planning a link-up event in August 2018 that will bring policy implementation partners and researchers together to share lessons and enhance the impact of the RCTs.

Our **case studies** prioritise research that analyses interactions between formal and informal institutions in relation to growth and development, with attention to policy implications. In 2017, we issued a request for

Economic Development and Institutions

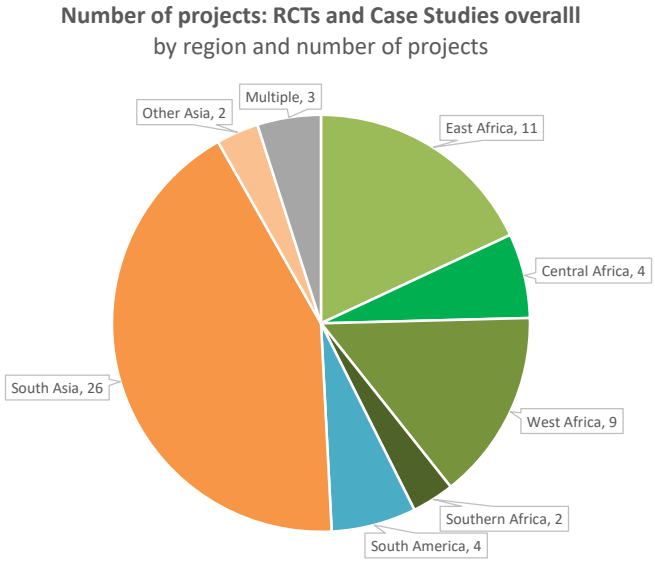
Institutions matter for growth and inclusive development, but there is little evidence on how positive institutional change can be achieved. The Economic Development and Institutions (EDI) research programme will fill this knowledge gap, and take an innovative approach to ensuring world-class research is translated into positive policy change.

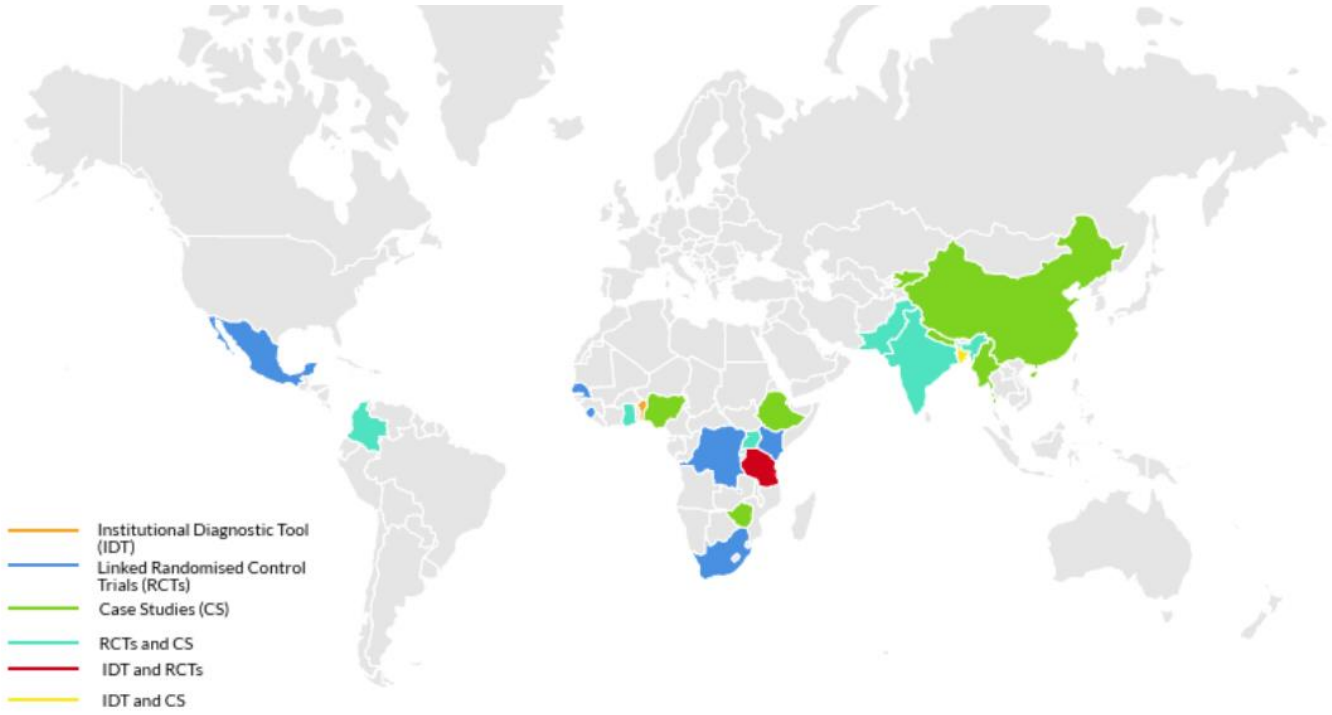
One unique aspect of this programme is its focus on policy engagement. The research team will seek to reflect policy 'demand' when defining research questions and engage key decision-makers throughout the course of the programme. This will involve listening to the challenges encountered by in-country policymakers and looking out for opportunities to engage with and support ongoing reform processes.

© Economic Development & Institutions

proposals that resulted in commissioning 20 case studies across three themes: 1) private sector and the institutional environment; 2) bureaucracies and state systems; and 3) informal social agencies (family, gender and conflicts). In early 2018, we issued a second request for additional research that largely focussed in theme 1: private sector and the institutional environment. Outcomes will be made available on this website, as they are confirmed. In total, the 31 studies take place in 19 different geographies with a focus on South Asia and East Africa.

The spread and depth of EDI, together with targeted policy engagement will ensure that the research breakthroughs we expect across the programme will translate into successful institutional policy reforms.





© Economic Development & Institutions