



*SPACES FOR ENGAGEMENT:
Using knowledge to improve public decisions*

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN ONLINE
COURSE ON HOW TO BUILD A POLICY
INFLUENCE PLAN**

*SHARING LESSONS LEARNED IN LATIN AMERICA,
ASIA AND AFRICA*

Launch of the call:

22/07/2011

Deadline for the reception of proposals:

14/08/2011

1. BACKGROUND

The project “Spaces for Engagement: Using knowledge to improve public decisions” is a [GDN](#) initiative, implemented in Latin America by [CIPPEC](#). The program builds on the results of four years of intense work that aimed at improving the bridge between research and public policies. The project started by unifying efforts to strengthen the capacity of Latin American policy research institutes (PRIs) on their influence in public policies through diverse activities such as: research, practical handbooks, workshops, face to face meetings and virtual exchange of experiences in a [Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#).

A high amount of experiences and lessons learned have been developed in this CoP during these years. We believe it is not only useful but necessary to share them with other southern regions, such as Africa and Asia. Not only organizations in these continents are concerned with all of these issues but also donors and international community are willing to know how to improve the link between research and governmental decisions in order to enhance public policies. Thereby this course responds to the necessity of improving organizational capacity to influence public policies in developing countries.

Through an effective combination of theoretical modules and practical exercises, courses aim to help CSOs, policy research institutes and state officials detect their strengths and opportunities for policy influence. Based on these, we help them focus their advocacy efforts in the right direction, maximizing available resources and developing intelligent strategies, underpinned by a successful political reading. Courses help participants to devise viable plans, which consequently lead to greater impact. Debates and exchange of experiences among trainees are also promoted. Technical advice is provided by facilitators through detailed feedback on completed exercises. By the end of each course, it is hoped that the participants will be able to use the tools and knowledge acquired to help them design effective advocacy strategies, be able to monitor and evaluate them as well as promote internal change within their organizations.

So far, we have developed six on line courses, four for Latin America and two for Asia and Africa, with 33 countries involved and 93 researchers, policy research institutes and civil society organizations trained on critical issues for policy influence.

Through this call, GDN and CIPPEC will support the participation of those who wish to expand their skills and knowledge to plan and implement public policy influence strategies.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective is to develop and improve current capacities of researchers, trainers and members of PRIs on their influence on decision makers regarding public policies in their countries in the regions of Africa and Asia. Scholarships will be given to participate in this course.

2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To promote and strengthen a policy influence planning culture within PRIs.

To facilitate theoretical materials and reflections on the advantages and limitations of planning

To equip participants with practical tools and methodologies to improve the diverse stages of policy influence

To promote online discussion and exchange of practical experiences related to recurrent and crucial challenges in influencing policy in developing countries

3. CONTENT

The course consists of six modules, which will focus on the main components of a plan for influencing public policies through research. The topics to be covered are:

1. Introduction and overall approach to public policy influence
2. The importance of defining the policy objective/s and actors involved
3. Designing and developing a concrete proposal for building a policy influence plan
4. Defining strategies and actions
5. Effective communication
6. What did we learn? Monitoring and evaluating our influence

4. DELIVERY OF THE PROPOSAL FOR THE PARTICIPATION

- a.* Due to the fact that the quota for the participation at the online course is limited, postulants must send a brief essay explaining the reasons that motivate them to participate and the utility they will give to the learned contents (maximum 2 pages).
- b.* The document's cover must include: postulant's name and organization he/she belongs to (if pertinent).
- c.* The document must be presented in A4 paper, using Book Antiqua font size 12 with simple space between lines and no more than 2 pages.
- d.* A résumé or CV.
- e.* A letter signed by the executive director of the organization in which the postulant undertakes to produce the two exercises that are given in the course, complying with the deadlines setting for them.

5. SCHEDULE

Activity	Date
Deadline for postulant's presentation	August 14 th , 2011
Selection and notification of winners	August 17 th , 2011
Beginning of the course (duration: 7 weeks)	August 29 th , 2011
End of the course	October 16 th , 2011

6. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Criteria to select the participants will include: 1) reasons exposed in the essay, 2) the experience of the postulant and/or his/her organization regarding public policies' influence, 3) the commitment of the participant and organization to share with others the generated knowledge.

It is very important for the success, usefulness and dynamic of the course that the participants assume the compromise of making at least a weekly contribution, by participating in the forums, sending materials or interesting information. The participants will be asked to present two different exercises through the course, and to submit the exercises on time (10 days are usually given between announcement and delivery of exercise). They will also be required to comment and make suggestions from other participant's exercises. The approximate time they will need to commit to read the material and prepare the exercises is between 8 and 10 hours a week. At the end of the course, participants will be requested to complete a written evaluation on different aspects of the course such as quality, usefulness, etc. that will allow tutors to improve future trainings.

7. REQUIREMENTS

- i. In order to be qualified to apply, all interested must be registered as a member of GDNet (www.gdnet.org)¹.
- ii. Interested participants must also submit their résumés.
- iii. The reception of the document will be up until August 14th, 2011 (7 pm GMT) via email to Leandro Echt (lecht@cippec.org).
- iv. Winners will be committed to read the material provided by the organizers, submit the exercises on time and have and actively participation in the forums.

¹ Those who are not registered can do it without costs.

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- v. Winners will be committed to participate in dialogue spaces organized by GDN and/or CIPPEC in order to socialize lessons learnt.

8. TESTIMONIALS

I was able to apply the tools in the real field of policy. I used the theories and conceptual frameworks delivered in the training within the Child Health Now Campaign and shared new acquired skills with my field teams

George William Ebulu, World Vision Uganda, Uganda

The exercises have helped my team at office to sharpen our strategies as we work to influence the enhanced use supply and demand of eco-materials for social housing in India

Zeenat Niazi, Development Alternatives Group, India

My policy worldview has been radically transformed after this course - and this will be beneficial not only to me, but my Institute.

Awuor Ponge, Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, Kenya

This has been a very enriching experience for me; because I never had much theoretical basis of what I do as communication practitioner

Nazmatun Noor, Center for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Contact us:

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