PAGE II

Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment

PEP-PAGE II program

Annual progress report

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I. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Building on the success of its **Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment** (PAGE[1]) program (2012-2016), PEP was granted funding by the **Department for International Development** (DFID) **of the United Kingdom** (or UK Aid) and the **International Development Research Centre** (IDRC) **of Canada** in 2016 to launch a new program supporting high quality research, capacity development, and policy engagement for growth and employment in developing countries: PAGE II[2]**.**

The initiative supports rigorous, locally-led analyses generating reliable evidence to assist in promoting inclusive growth, employment and female empowerment through improved policies related to labour markets, social protection and entrepreneurship in developing countries.

Projects supported under the PAGE II initiative not only contribute to building and promoting local expertise in beneficiary countries - with priority given to low-income economies (LIEs), fragile and/or conflict-affected situations (FS) - but also help fill current evidence gaps in the scientific literature on growth and employment through the application of cutting-edge methodologies to the specific contexts of these countries.

In order to achieve the general objectives and commitments set out in the PAGE II proposal:

- IDRC has granted PEP CAD3M, through agreement (or IDRC project) number 108196-001
- DFID has made available a sum of (maximum) £5.8M, through the ARIES project code 204153-102,

This funding has allowed the selection and support of 46 project grants[3] of policy analysis, including

- 30 grants for non-experimental research projects, using techniques of macro- or microeconomic analysis (MPIA, PMMA) and of a standard duration of 18 months
    - Round 1: 16 projects
    - Round 2: 14 projects
- 8 grants for projects involving the community-based monitoring system (CBMS), each lasting approximately 2 years – all selected as part of Round 1.
- 6 grants for projects of experimental research, including:
    - Round 1: 4 randomized controlled trials (RCT), duration of 2-3 years
    - Round 2: 2 field experiments, duration of 18 months
- 2 grants combined to support a new type of "institutionalization project"[4], aimed at institutionalizing capacity in CGE modelling within a selected research center, and with an expected duration of 2 to 3 years

In addition, both donors have also made available "Quality Incentive Payments", to be allocated at their own discretion and dependant on the achievement of specific targets in terms of:

[1] https://www.pep-net.org/page-i-2012-2016
[2] https://www.pep-net.org/page-ii-2016-2020
[3] Down from the initial target of 50 projects, due to the depreciation of the British Pound, the effect of which is projected (as of August 2019) to amount to a total loss of USD 1.430 million.
[4] In terms of outputs, one institutionalization project is the equivalent of 2 standard research grants in the MPIA group (macro-micro policy modelling)

- Capacity building and policy outreach, for IDRC – a proposed evaluation framework for this incentive system was approved by IDRC in January 2017. A new application is included as **ANNEX F** (to be submitted by end of September 2019)[5]**,** presenting the results from the latest evaluations of projects.
- Scientific quality of the research work, for DFID – this evaluation is based on the Research Excellence Framework and completed by a series of complementary criteria (e.g. publications from LIE/FS countries, example of an impact of research). A third application was submitted in July 2019, and has already been approved by DFID, resulting in a 200K incentive grant payment.

The starting date for the DFID component was January 15, 2016 (ending March 31, 2020), while the IDRC component started on August 1 2016 (ending July 31, 2020)[6]. It was agreed that the project would submit annual reports for the period ending August 31 of each year and mid-year reports for the period ending February 28.

This is the 7th progress report submitted by PEP to both donors (DFID and IDRC) to provide information on the activities undertaken and progress achieved in the context of these agreements, between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019 (i.e. annual report).

II. SYNTHESIS: OVERVIEW OF ONGOING/RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

Round 1

A total of **29 project** teams (30 research grants) **in 22 different countries were selected for support under the first funding round of PAGE II.** These include:

- 16 projects with an 18-month research cycle – now completed
  - 9 projects in microeconomic analysis (PMMA)
  - 7 projects in macro-micro policy modelling (MPIA)
- 13 projects with a 2 to 3-year cycle – to be completed by the end of 2019
  - 1 "institutionalization project" under the modelling group (MPIA) - the equivalent of 2 standard research grants
  - 4 projects in experimental research, using randomized controlled trials (PIERI)
  - 8 projects using community-based monitoring systems (CBMS)

15 (52%) of these projects are in low-income economies, fragile and/or conflict-affected situations (LIE/FS) and 13 (45%) focus on gender.

Together, these 29 projects (30 grants) involve a total of 139 developing country researchers, including 82 (59%) women and 75 (54%) in LIE/FS.

Of the 16 completed projects under Round 1:

[5] A one-month extension for the submission of this particular component (ANNEX F) of the report, applicable to all subsequent PAGE II progress reports, was requested to (and approved by) IDRC – e.g. 3rd application for the IDRC incentive grant was submitted by the end of September 2018, and the 4th will be submitted by the end of March 2019, and so on.

[6] In 2019, IDRC agreed to fund a 3rd round/competition to support an additional series of PAGE II research projects (see details here: https://www.pep-net.org/pep-call-proposals-page-ii). PEP will submit a first report on progress of the 3rd round's implementation in April 2020.

- All have completed their full set of research deliverables, including translation of findings into both working paper and policy brief formats – available on the PEP website[7]
- 15 teams have communicated findings, in person, to key stakeholders in the country, both or either through PEP-sponsored national policy conferences (12) and/or direct/private advisory meetings with policy actors.
- 12 have reported that findings have already (3), or will likely/soon be (9), used to inform policy (see **sections III and VI** below for more information about impact)
- 13 have been invited to present their research work/findings at a high-level international academic conference, including 7 whose participation has been funded by the PEP-PAGE II program[8]

The other 14 ongoing projects under Round 1 (2 grants under the MPIA institutionalization project, 4 PIERI-RCTs and 8 CBMS) presented their final results at the 2019 PEP Annual Conference in South Africa (May 29-June 1), and are expected to complete deliverables by the end of 2019.

The MPIA institutionalization project and most (7) CBMS teams have already disseminated findings through at least 2 events each (either public conferences or private meetings).

Round 2

In June 2018, a second cohort of **16 project teams, in 15 different countries** (including **6 in LIE/FS**), were selected to receive support under the second funding round. These 16 projects involve a total of **62 developing country researchers, including 35 (56%) women and 23 (37%) from LIE/FS - see ANNEX B**

In 2019, 15/16 project teams completed an international study visit (to work on their final reports with their PEP mentors) and all presented their research results at the 2019 PEP Annual Conference in South Africa. Most final reports have already been approved and all other deliverables shall be completed by the end of 2019.

NOTE:

The list of all (Round 1 and Round 2) selected projects, as well as related statistics/demographics - including the lists of PEP resource persons involved in their support - and milestones/activities achieved to date are presented in **ANNEX B**. **The lists of individual beneficiaries** (research team members) are presented in **ANNEX C**, including participants in the 2017 and 2018 conferences and various training activities.

New evaluation framework

Both the scientific (TRG[9]) and policy outreach (POC[8]) mentors are required to complete periodic evaluations of their assigned teams' progress and achievements. These assessments are processed through the new IDRC incentive system's (IS) evaluation framework, which assesses **PEP's performance in terms of supporting capacity building and policy outreach** with selected PAGE II projects.

The results from the latest evaluation round, completed in August 2019 will be reported in **ANNEX F** of this report (to be submitted by end of September 2019).

[7] Find the working papers here: https://www.pep-net.org/working-papers and the policy briefs here: https://www.pep-net.org/policy-briefs

[8] PEP has identified a list of strategic conferences (both in terms of academic level and visibility), for which (PAGE II) grantees are invited to submit an application for PEP to support their participation (to present their PEP-funded research work).

[9] Find the scientific mentors here: www.pep-net.org/resource-persons-2 and policy outreach mentors here: https://www.pep-net.org/people/policy-outreach-committee

New 2019 edition of PEP online courses (January-March)

This year's edition of PEP online courses was "opened" to all PAGE II researchers (Round 1 and 2), with only an administrative fee of $100, as well as to the general public for a modest fee of $600. For the former (PAGE II), the courses were mandatory only for those project team members who had not successfully completed their assigned courses before project selection. All other PAGE II researchers were invited to participate in additional courses on a voluntary basis.

The program included three courses (see section 3.1.2 below), together forming a **new graduate microprogram in applied development economics** provided, in both French and English, in collaboration with (and certified by) Université Laval[10]. New modules were developed in 2018 for two of the courses and introduced in the 2019 edition.

A total of **113 participants in 43 developing countries** (and 6 in Canada) **– including 42% women and 56% in LIE/FS** – completed one or several of these courses (total of 133 courses taken) in 2019. 45 of these participants were PAGE II researchers, and the majority were from the general public (indicating the increased popularity of these courses). Also, only 14 of the PAGE II participants were required to take the courses they had failed in the previous edition (2018) - the others did so voluntarily. Find out more in **ANNEX B.**

To substantially increase the reach of these courses, PEP and the course instructors agreed unanimously to render all video capsules from the three courses available, in French and English, to the public free of charge through PEP's YouTube channel[11]. PEP will continue to charge fees for officially registered course participants who receive individualized instructor support, access to the course forums, evaluations, certification and diplomas.

2019 PEP Annual Conference (May-June)

Held in May 29-June 3 in Cape Town, South Africa, the 2019 PEP Annual Conference brought together more than 130 researchers, practitioners, international experts, representatives of donor and international organizations, and policy actors from 44 countries, for a highly successful event[12].

Among them, a total of 43 researchers representing 27 PAGE II research teams[13] (including 25 women and 17 from LIE/FS) were there to present and discuss their research results, both through group/peer-review sessions and individual meetings with PEP mentors. They were also provided with a one-day workshop to review best practices for research-policy communication. All sessions were recorded (and shared) for the benefit of those PAGE II team members who did not attend the conference.

PAGE II-related participants/beneficiaries also included 6 government officials invited to discuss the integration/use of CBMS to inform their policy interventions and governance practices, as a result of PAGE II-CBMS research teams' outreach and collaboration.

The event concluded with a public policy conference on the theme: "Evidence use in policymaking: How to integrate policy evaluation into policy design" (including a keynote by Santiago Levy, 2 panel discussions and special UNDP presentation), also broadcasted on the PEP YouTube channel[14].

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[10] Find out more : www.pep-net.org/events/online-training-courses
[11] Find them here: www.youtube.com/user/PEPvideochannel/playlists?view=50&sort=dd&shelf_id=6
[12] Find out more about the 2019 PEP Annual Conference: www.pep-net.org/2019-pep-annual-conference-cape-town-south-africa
[13] 2 teams (1 CBMS from Nicaragua and 1 MPIA from Bolivia) had been invited but were unable to make it due to travel/transit issues in Latin America. They were however able to make presentations via Skype
[14] Find the video clips here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOQ8XYmRBy8&feature=youtu.be&t=1835

III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT
September 2017- February 2018

3.1. Detailed account of activities, progress and achievements

Below is an overview of recent milestones and progress achieved for each group/type of projects since the last progress report (September 2018). The lists and demographics of projects are presented in **ANNEX B**, and those of project team members in **ANNEX C.** Finally, each individual project's objectives and outcomes are described in detail in **ANNEX E**.

3.1.1. Progress/achievements per project group

Round 1 – 2017-2019

Table 1: Projects supported under PAGE II Round 1

Number of	PMMA	CBMS	PIERI-RCT	MPIA	Institutionalization project (MPIA)	Total
Projects selected	**9**	**8**	**4**	**7**	**2**	**30**
Different countries	9	8	4	6	1	22
Projects in LIE/FS*	3	4	2	6	0	15
Gender-focused projects	4	5	2	3	0	14
Female team leaders	4	4	2	3	0	13
Researchers involved	**42**	**48**	**16**	**26**	**6**	**138**
Female researchers	26	28	9	14	4	82
Researchers in LIE/FS*	16	28	8	23	0	75
Number of former PEP grantees	8	10	3	6	2	29

***LIE/FS:** low-income economies (LIE) and/or fragile or conflict-affected situations (FS). See lists of LIE/FS countries

PMMA – Microeconomic analysis - 9 projects
MPIA – Macro-micro policy modelling - 7 "standard research grant" projects

Total of 16 projects

The list of activities/milestones achieved over the course of the reporting period (September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019) for PMMA/MPIA Round 1 projects can be summarized as follows:

- **Translation/publication of final research report into working paper format (including external and editorial reviews)** – 16 projects
- **Translation/publication into policy brief format** – 16 projects
- **Organization of national policy conferences** – 12 projects
- **Preparing submissions for scientific journals** – 6 papers submitted, several in preparation

Find out more about dissemination and impact of these projects in section IV below and ANNEX E.

MPIA institutionalization project

1 institution, but project/output equivalent to two individual research grants

This project is led by a research center based in Mongolia, called Economic Research Institute (ERI). The list of activities/milestones achieved in the context of this particular project during the reporting period includes:

- **Organization of a 3rd and a 4th policy consultation/dissemination workshops** (November 2018) to present and discuss ongoing and future research with national policy actors
- **Publication of a 3rd policy brief**[15]
- **Presentation of final results at 2019 PEP Annual Conference**
- **Completion of 5 research reports, and translation into working paper format** – 4 approved for publication (undergoing editorial review), 1 in preparation.
- **Preparing submissions for scientific journals** – ongoing

The next activities/milestones planned for this project include the publication of the 5 working papers and preparation of related articles for submission to journals.

PIERI – Experimental research - 4 projects using randomized controlled trial

The list of activities/milestones achieved during the reporting period for these four projects includes:

- **Completion of follow up surveys, data analysis and submission of final research reports -** 3 completed, 1 preparing for second follow up survey (to be held in last quarter of 2019).
    - One project in Mongolia received additional support from the World Bank which will allow the project to complete two follow up surveys. However, since the World Bank funds had to be disbursed before the end of 2018, they were used to finance the first follow up (completed now). The PAGE II funds are this being used to finance the second survey, to be completed by the end of 2019. The final report will be produced after this second survey, but the project is still expected to complete within the PAGE II calendar (with publications and final grant payments completed in March 2020).
- **Presentation of results at 2019 PEP Annual Conference** – 4 projects
- **Approval of final reports and submission of draft working papers for review** – 3 projects
- **Submission of dissemination and publication strategies** – 3 projects
- **Final advisory meeting with POC mentor to refine policy messaging of findings** – 3 projects

The next activities/milestones planned for the 3 completed projects include the publication and dissemination of findings (working paper, policy brief, national policy conferences, preparation of journal submissions) for 3 projects, while the Mongolia team will finalize and report on the second follow up survey.

CBMS – Community-based monitoring systems - 8 projects

The list of activities/milestones achieved over the course of the reporting period for these 8 projects includes:

- **Completion of SDG reports** – 8 completed
- **Presentation of SDG reports at the CBMS International Network Policy Conference on Localizing the SDGs/15th CBMS-Philippines national conference in Manila (**March 13-15, 2019)
- **Presentation of draft thematic papers** during a 2 day technical workshop session of to discuss draft thematic papers and mentoring support (March 11-12, 2019)– 7 projects

[15] Policy briefs 175, 176 and 182: https://www.pep-net.org/policy-briefs

- **Preparation and presentation of thematic papers at 2019 PEP Annual Conference** – 7 projects (1 via Skype)
- **Submission of draft policy briefs** – 7 projects on revision
- **Dissemination** – 7 teams organized local dissemination activities to present and discuss findings with stakeholders

The next activities/milestones planned for these 8 projects include the publication of papers (3 per project), and final dissemination activities. From September 2019 to July 2020, the CBMS Network Team of DLSU-AKI will be working with the CBMS project teams for the inclusion of the PAGE-CBMS project outputs particularly the CBMS design and SDG papers in forthcoming 2 CBMS Books, and for the submission of the CBMS thematic papers for publication of a special issue in the DLSU Business and Economics Review.

Round 2 – 2018-2019

Table 2: Projects supported under PAGE II Round 2

Number of	PMMA	PIERI-RCT	MPIA	Total
Projects selected	**9**	**2**	**5**	**16**
Different countries	9	2	5	15
Projects in LIE/FS*	4	2	0	6
Gender-focused projects	2	0	2	4
Female team leaders	3	0	2	5
Researchers involved	**35**	**8**	**19**	**62**
Female researchers	20	4	11	35
Researchers in LIE/FS*	15	8	0	23
Number of former PEP grantees	3	0	2	5

PMMA – Microeconomic analysis - 9 projects
MPIA – Macro-micro policy modelling - 5 projects (standard)

Total of 14 projects

The list of activities/milestones achieved over the course of the reporting period for PMMA/MPIA Round 2 projects can be summarized as follows:

- **Approval of interim research report** – 14 projects
- **International study visit** – 13 projects
- **Presentation of results/draft final reports at 2019 PEP Annual Conference** – 14 projects (1 via Skype)
- **Approval of final research reports** – 14 projects
- **Submission of dissemination and publication strategies** – 14 projects
- **Final advisory meeting with POC mentor to refine policy messaging of findings** – 14 projects

The next activities/milestones planned for these 14 projects include the publication and dissemination of findings (working paper, policy brief, national policy conference), as well as the preparation of journal submissions.

PIERI – Experimental research - 2 projects using field experiments

The list of activities/milestones achieved during the reporting period for these four projects includes:

- **Baseline data collection and report** – 2 completed and approved
- **Field visits** – 2 completed
- **Roll out interventions** – 2 completed
- **Follow up survey, analysis and report** – 2 completed
- **Presentation of results at 2019 PEP Annual Conference – 2 projects**
- **International study visits** – 2 projects
- **Approval of final reports and submission of draft working papers for review** – 2 projects
- **Submission of dissemination and publication strategies** – 2 projects
- **Final advisory meeting with POC mentor to refine policy messaging of findings** – 2 projects

The next activities/milestones planned for these 2 projects include the publication and dissemination of findings (working paper, policy brief, national policy conference), as well as the preparation of journal submissions.

Grant management

All PEP-PAGE II research grants are being administered and managed through the PEP Global Secretariat[16], headed by PEP's Executive Director and based in Nairobi, Kenya.

3.1.2. New strategy and activities to increase scope and access of PEP capacity building

Online courses and training

The PAGE II program has resulted in the development of a new series of PEP online courses[17], which have allowed the following improvement in PEP's practices:

- All members of shortlisted research teams benefit from PEP training - in the past, only members participating in the PEP general meetings received basic training.
- Screening researchers before they attend PEP Annual Conferences, to ensure that they already have a minimum level of training at this stage, so that PEP can organize more advanced and team-specific training activities at the PEP annual conference.
    - Only those applicant team members who have successfully completed the relevant online course are eligible to participate in PEP activities involving travel (i.e. PEP conferences and study visits).

In 2019, all PAGE II researchers were invited to register in one or two other courses of their choice (out of the three courses available which they had not yet completed), to extend their training beyond the program/methods of their project's affiliated PEP thematic research group (TRG). While 14 of them were required to take the course they had failed or missed in 2018 (to be eligible to attend the PEP Conference in South Africa), another 37 registered to one or two new courses on a voluntary basis.

Additionally, to extend the reach of PEP training even further, the courses are now made available to external participants (who are not PEP grant recipients), for a modest fee[18] – these constituted the majority of participants in the 2019 edition.

[16] In the case of CBMS projects, grant management support is being provided to PEP Global Secretariat by the CBMS Network Office of the DLSU-AKI based in Manila, Philippines

[17] Find out more about the courses here: https://www.pep-net.org/online-training-courses

In the end, **113 participants completed the courses** they had registered in (8 participants dropped out), for a total of **133 courses completed in 2019** (19 participants completed more than 1 course), **72% of which were successful.**

See the full demographics and statistics below:

Table 3: 2019 PEP online courses participants

	No participants	Female	LIE/FS	Success	PAGE Round 2	PAGE Round 1	PEP Fellow /staff, UL students	External (paying)**
CGE Modelling	**55**	16	28	49	6	12	5	32
Policy Impact Analysis	**42**	21	30	27	10	8	1	23
Measuring and Alleviating Poverty and Inequality	**36**	12	20	20	3	14	3	16
Total	**113** (133)*	**44**(49)*	**66** (78)*	(96)	**19**(19)*	**26** (34)*	**8** (9)*	**60** (71)*

*Number of individual participants/trainees (total number of courses completed)
**Found out about the course through advertisement

To dramatically increase the reach of these courses, PEP and the course instructors agreed unanimously to render all video capsules from the three courses available, in French and English, to the public free of charge through PEP's YouTube channel. PEP will continue to charge fees for officially registered course participants who receive individualized instructor support, access to the course forums, evaluations, certification and diplomas.

And all PEP online courses are available in both French and English.

PEP Conferences, international study and field visits

Among other improvements from PAGE I is the possibility for shortlisted/supported research teams to send up to two members (versus one in PAGE I) to;

- Represent their team (to present proposals or results[19]) and benefit from a variety of intensive training workshops at the PEP Annual Conferences
- Participate in an international study visit.

Since the beginning of PAGE II, a total of:

- **76 developing country researchers -** including 29 women and 37 from LIE/FS – have benefited from an **international study visit**, during which they received ongoing and customized support from PEP mentors,
    - In several cases, visiting researchers also had the opportunity to present their findings to scholars at the host institution.
- **133 developing country researchers –** including 75 women and 61 in LIE/FS – have participated in at least one **PEP Annual Conference** (either in Kenya in 2017, India in 2018, or South Africa in 2019), where they benefited from a variety of new and/or advanced workshops, as well as international peer review and customized advisory support.

[18] This has also ensured the self-sustainability of this new PEP service – see section XI below.
[19] Except for the 2018 Conference in India, where only one member per Round 1 (PMMA, MPIA) project team were invited to present their results, as part of our efforts to absorb the Brexit losses.

- **5 project teams** (involving 22 researchers in 4 countries) have also benefited from **field visits** from their respective PEP mentors
    - Field visits also contribute to increase the number of researchers who benefit from direct interaction with and advice from PEP international experts.
    - In several cases, the visiting PEP mentors were invited to meet with key policy stakeholder institutions to discuss their PEP-related work and the concerned project.

The list of visits and institutions is presented in **ANNEX B**, while the list of individual participants/beneficiaries (to the different activities organized in the context of the PAGE II initiative) is presented in **ANNEX C.**

Policy engagement

Also as part of PAGE II, PEP has introduced new support activities in order to strengthen researchers' skills in policy analysis and advocacy. First, PEP provides guidance to all shortlisted applicant teams to develop their project's **policy context analysis,** which must be submitted along with their final project proposal. During the PEP Annual Conferences, all teams' representatives are also required to participate in **intensive workshops to review best practices for 1) policy engagement** (at proposal stage) and **2) research communication** (at final report stage).

Furthermore, once selected for support teams are assigned **a mentor from the new PEP Policy Outreach Committee (POC)**[20], to advise the design and implementation of an effective policy engagement and communication strategy throughout the research cycle.

33 of the 45 selected PAGE II research teams were assigned (and benefited from periodic advisory meetings with) a POC mentor[21]. 14 of these teams completed their project cycle in 2018 and were asked to complete a survey to evaluate PEP's new strategy/approach to support policy outreach. The results (47 respondents) to date reveal that:

- ALL (100% respondents) believe that this new program has contributed to enhancing their capacity and/or propensity to engage with policy.
- Among the activities comprised in this new program, 47% of respondents have ranked the **policy context analysis**[22] as the one to have had the most impact in terms of building their individual capacity for policy-engaged research.
- Regarding the **policy outreach (POC) mentorship**, 93% consider that:
    - it was instrumental in the success of their policy engagement strategies, and
    - it has contributed to building long-term capacity for conducting "policy-engaged" research within their team.

The members of the other 19 teams will have completed the survey by the end of 2019.

As a result of this new program to support policy engagement, **15 project teams have reported official statements by relevant decision-makers** of their **intent to use findings to inform policy decisions - and in 3 cases, actual policy decisions/changed have already been influenced by the said evidence base.** Moreover, **77 (38%) researchers** have reported major career-promoting events that would/have lead/led to their **increased influence or involvement in policy processes.**

[20] As of February 2019, the Policy Outreach Committee consists of 9 members, 7 of which are currently acting as mentors of ongoing projects. See : www.pep-net.org/people/policy-outreach-committee.

[21] 8 CBMS and 1 MPIA-ISP teams were advised/supervised in policy outreach by their TRG mentors, and 3 teams from Round 1 (2 PMMA and 1 PIERI), involving former PAGE I grantees were considered not to be in need of such mentoring.

[22] Initially developed with guidance from PEP staff, and then further discussed/revised with the policy outreach mentor once the project is selected.

Incentives and strategies to increase overall performance

In the context of PAGE II, both donors have decided to establish new "incentive systems", to encourage increased performance (beyond the standard objectives set in the agreements and logframe) in different areas.

Research quality (DFID): Strategy for improving publications drawn from PEP-PAGE research

As part of the implementation of DFID's incentive system (for research quality), PEP scientific leaders have developed a renewed strategy to improve publications drawn from PEP-PAGE research, as well to increase the chances and number of publications in high-level peer-reviewed journals. This strategy comprises:

- A new **scientific writing workshop** (and related resources[23]): provided during PEP Annual Conferences
- The **revision of PEP grant contracts**, to include the mandatory publication of working papers, as well as incentives to encourage preparation of articles for submission in scientific journals.
- A **mentorship agreement**, co-signed by all project members and their mentor, strongly encouraging them to seek to co-author a working paper and journal article based on the project.
- A recommended list of strategic/high-visibility **international conferences** for PEP researchers to present their results in order to review peer comments to improve their quality. This list is updated, and submission deadlines are indicated when calls are launched, on a monthly basis.
- Proposals of "**PEP special issues**" to high-level journals
    - One was published by Environment and Development Economics in 2018 (including 5 articles based on PAGE projects), and another was submitted to the Review of Development Economics in 2019 (again with papers from five PAGE projects, one of which has already been accepted and published online).

A third application – presenting two REF 3* and two REF 2* publications, as well as two impact stories from recently concluded PAGE II projects - was submitted to DFID in July 2019, resulting in a grant allocation of 200K British pounds.

As of August 2019, **30 out of 75 projects (37%)** supported by PEP between 2013 and 2016 have been **published in peer-reviewed journals** – 23 of the 65 PAGE I projects, and 7 of the 10 STAARS projects – and **19 (64%) of them in high-ranking journals (including 12 from projects led in LIE/FC countries).**

Another initiative/practice implemented in 2016 by PEP in relation to quality of PEP research and publications is the systematic analysis of all research documents and outputs (including proposals) to detect cases of **plagiarism** – which is not tolerated and would result in rejection of proposals or discontinuation of selected projects.

Capacity building and policy outreach: A new approach to assessing the impact of research initiatives.

In 2016, PEP developed a proposal for IDRC on how to use, while expanding and improving, its current M&E system to produce detailed and comparative assessments of the performance and impact of each project in terms of capacity building and policy outreach. Several new indicators were added to the system, following the review of existing literature on evaluation of research capacity building, as well as a baseline plus scoring system associated with each category of indicators and performance. The overall model of the evaluation framework was inspired by IDRC's recently published RQ+ framework.

[23] See www.pep-net.org/support/training-and-resources/scientific-and-policy-brief-writing

A final proposal, detailing the agreement on the implementation of the new IDRC-funded incentive system to measure and reward PEP's performance specifically in the areas of capacity building and policy outreach, was officially submitted to and approved by IDRC in January 2017.

Four applications have been submitted to (and approved by) IDRC so far – in September 2017, March and September 2018, as well as March 2019; a new one is submitted with this report, as **ANNEX F** (to be submitted by end of September 2019). The applications present the compilation of results from periodic surveys and evaluations of selected PAGE II teams to date, used to assess (as a percentage score) the **overall performance of PEP in terms of 1) building capacity and 2) promoting policy engagement among grantees throughout the PEP research support cycle.** The application also details the process of this evaluation.

3.2. Governance and management

3.2.1. PEP Corporate Members

As a new entity of the PEP governance structure, established with the revision of the latter in 2016, the PEP Corporate Members (CM)[24] currently includes two representatives of the Partners, two representatives of the PEP Research Fellows and the seven members of the Board of Directors. The CMs, who meet once a year during the PEP Annual Conferences, are responsible for electing the seven Directors (or Board members), to approve changes in by-laws, as well as to admit and terminate Partners.

The Corporate Members have held three meetings so far. In 2019, the CM achieved the following:

- Receive PEP 2018 Annual Technical and Financial Reports
- Approve new Board Members

3.2.2. PEP Board of Directors

PEP's Board of Directors[25] (composed of 7 voting members and the ED as an ex-officio member) is in charge of determining broad strategic directions, defining the lines of action and institutional composition (approval/selection of partners and directors), providing oversight and monitoring the organization's overall performance.

Since the last PAGE II progress report (September 2018), the Board has continued to play its fiduciary role, as well as financial oversight, and three Board committees are now fully operational: Finance and Audit, Partnership and a new Board nominations committee.

Over the course of the reporting period, the Board held their official bi-annual meetings via teleconference on November 30, 2018, and in person during the 2019 PEP Annual Conference in South Africa, on June 1, 2019. During these two meetings, they achieved the following:

- Approved the 2018 financial report and the 2019 budget.
- Approved the 2019 programme of activities
- Approved the 2018 financial statements and External audit report
- Approved a 2nd Research Fellow representative to Corporate Membership.
- Completed replacement of 3 retiring Board members (i.e. recruiting 3 new members[26])

[24] www.pep-net.org/people/corporate-members
[25] www.pep-net.org/board
[26] Find out more about the recent changes in Board composition: https://www.pep-net.org/three-new-members-to-join-board-directors

- Initiated PEP Institutional review.
- Approved the following Institutional policies:
    - Financial Management Policies and corresponding Manual of Procedures
    - Risk Appetite and Risk management policy
    - Travel policy
    - Safeguarding policy
    - Conflict of interest policy
    - Whistle blower policy
    - HR policy and procedures manual
    - Policy and procedures for consultant engagement

The next official Board meeting will take place in December 2019. The meeting will be « in person » and last two full days, so as to induct the new Board members.

3.2.3. PEP Program Committee

The PEP Program Committee (PC)[27] is composed of the leaders of the four Thematic Research Groups (TRGs), the PEP Executive Director and the PEP Director of Communications and M&E (as ex-officio member).

Generally, the PC is responsible for coordinating the efforts and activities to ensure the successful execution of the annual program of activities (including PAGE-related activities), particularly in terms of thematic and regional coverage. The PC meets (virtually) on a monthly basis - mostly teleconference but also once in person during the PEP Annual Conferences.

With regards to the institutionalization of PEP, PC members contribute to preparing and pre-approving all policy and other key documents, such as new proposals for donors, annual program of activities, budgets, annual reports, etc., several of which must be submitted to and validated/approved by the Board.

Since September 2018, documents prepared and/or approved by the PC include:

- International conferences strategy
- 2019 work plan and budget
- New proposal for IDRC (PAGE II extension)
- Concept notes for development of climate change as a core PEP research theme
- Datasets for publication on PEP website, in line with open access policy
- A new set of “advice for PEP mentors”

3.2.4. PEP Global Secretariat

Following the consolidation of the PEP Global Secretariat in 2016, all PEP staff members[28], regardless of their location, are now directly coordinated through the PEP Nairobi Office, and under the supervision and leadership of the PEP Executive Director. The Global Secretariat is in charge of coordinating, supervising, managing/ administering, monitoring and reporting on the general program of PEP activities on a continual/daily basis.

The GS meets officially (virtually) on a monthly basis, and “unofficially” nearly once a week to coordinate specific activities. They also meet in person at least once a year, during the PEP Annual Conference, and sometimes during special PEP staff retreats – one of which was held in Kenya in February 2019.

[27] www.pep-net.org/pep-program-committee
[28] www.pep-net.org/global-secretariat

3.3. Challenges and disappointments

The implementation of the core PAGE II program has not faced any particular challenges so far, and implementation is right on track to achieve all its targets and objectives within the pre-determined timeframe.

Of course, the depreciation of the British Pound due to Brexit effect had a huge effect – now projected to amount to a total loss of USD 1.430 m illion. As a result, the total output committed for PAGE II was reduced - from 50 to 46 individual research grants, and 2 Research Fellow grants – and various cost-saving adjustments were made in initially planned activities.

3.4. Context (update)

There are no contextual changes or new evidence (literature or data) to report that may challenge the PAGE II program's design or rationale.

IV. OUTPUTS

4.1. Highlights

As of February 2019:

Research & capacity building

- **30 journal publications** based on PEP-supported projects since 2015 - **including 19 in REF 2* or REF 3* journals (12 of which from projects led in LIE-FS).**
- **325 developing country researchers** participated in **one or several PEP online (distance training) courses** in 2017, 2018 and 2019 - including 160 women and 150 in LIE/FS
- **139 developing country researchers** benefited from **in-class training workshops** (technical and non-technical) - including 76 women and 65 from LIE/FS
- **46* projects/grants supported in 33 developing countries (21 in LEF/FS), involving 201 developing country researchers (including 117 women and 98 in LIE/FS)**
    - 21 of these projects focus primarily on gender issues
- **76 developing country researchers**, from 43 project teams (44 project grants), have benefited from an **international study visit** - including 29 women and 37 from LIE/FS
    - 18 other researchers (including 10 women) have benefited from one or several field visits from their respective PEP mentors.

Also, in terms of capacity building - or **consolidation of the knowledge/skills gained through PEP**:

- **Application of PEP-taught skills/knowledge <u>in other (non-PEP)</u> research work:**
    - **151 researchers** for the new **research skills/knowledge** - including 82 women and 82 in LIE/FS
    - **94 researchers** for the knowledge related to **policy engagement/communication** - including 52 women and 45 in LIE/FS
- **Transfer of PEP taught skills/knowledge to peers at home** (e.g. via training or mentoring activities):
    - **131 researchers** for the new **research skills/knowledge** - including 69 women and 72 in LIE/FS

- **74 researchers** for the knowledge related to **policy engagement/communication** - incl. 35 women and 39 in LIE/FS

Policy engagement & dissemination

- **All (46*)** supported project grants have been **designed in direct consultations with policy stakeholders.**
    - **35 project** teams reported that the **stakeholders' inputs had been used to influence the design** of the research project
- **36* project** teams have also continued to **engage in periodic consultations with policy stakeholders, while conducting research**
- **28*** project teams have already **discussed their findings, in person and officially, with policy stakeholders, either/both in the context of "public events" and/or direct (private) policy advisory meetings**
- **39* project** teams managed to **engage stakeholders in dissemination of findings**
- **18** of the completed projects' findings have been **reported by national news media.**

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Impact

- **15 project** teams have reported **official statements by relevant decision-makers** of their intent to use findings to inform policy decisions - and **in 3 cases, actual policy decisions/changed have already been influenced by the said evidence base.**
- **93 researchers have reported major career-promoting events**, due to their involvement in the PEP-PAGE II project – including 51 women and 44 in LIE-FS)
    - **77 of these researchers** (42 women and 35 in LIE/FS) reported events leading to their **increased influence or involvement in policy processes**
- **19 projects (including 8 in LIE/FS) have resulted in new research funding/contracts,** awarded to one or several team members through successful grant applications, due to their PEP-PAGE II project/training

4.2. Logframe outputs

This section reports on the progress in achieving targets committed for each of the PAGE II program's expected outputs, which were defined in agreement with DFID as part of the program's logframe - presented in **ANNEX A**.

The logframe comprises a series of indicators (see column B) that are being used to track and attest to the achievement of the program's outputs, outcomes and impact (see column A) in terms of capacity building, research, policy outreach, and institutional development.

Output 1 - CAPACITY BUILDING

Members of selected developing country research teams trained in the use/application of cutting-edge methodologies for policy analysis, and in the design and implementation of effective policy engagement and research communication strategies

Indicator 1.1	Number of researchers who participated in PEP online training courses	
MILESTONE 1	**June 2017**	
Targets:	L: 40 (40% LIE/FS) researchers M: 50 (40% LIE/FS) researchers H: 60 (40% LIE/FS) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **110 (50% LIE/FS) researchers**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2018**	
	L: 73 (40% LIC) researchers M: 92 (40% LIC) researchers H: 110 (40% LIC) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **252 (45% LIE/FS) researchers, 52% women**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**June 2019**	
	L: 73 (40% LIC) researchers M: 92 (40% LIC) researchers H: 110 (40% LIC) researchers	STATUS: **LARGELY EXCEEDED** RESULT: **325 (46% LIE/FS) researchers, 49% women**

Three editions of PEP online courses provided already

- one in January to March 2017
  - 2 courses, CGE modelling and Policy Impact Analysis
  - mandatory for Round 1 shortlisted MPIA, PMMA and PIERI applicant team members
  - 110 participants - 58 women and 54 in LIE/FS – 98 (89%) succeeded
- one in January to March 2018
  - 3 courses: same as 2017 + new course on Measuring and Alleviating Poverty and Inequality
  - two courses (same as 2017) mandatory for Round 2 applicant team members), but all three also open to interested Round 1 and external participants (who could take more than one course)
  - 142 participants – 72 women and 60 in LIE/FS – with success rate of 89% again
- One in January to March 2019
  - 3 courses: same as 2018, but including new modules in impact evaluation and multidimensional poverty
  - 113 participants - 44 women and 66 in LIE/FS – with success rate of 72%

For a total of **325 developing country researchers who have benefited from PEP online training courses so far, including 160 (49%) women and 150 (46%) in LIE/FS.**

The detailed demographics of participants for each course are presented in **ANNEX B.**

Indicator 1.2	Number of (male/female) researchers who participated in a PEP (in class) training workshop	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**June 2017**	
	L: 30 (40% LIE/FS) researchers M: 40 (40% LIE/FS) researchers H: 50 (40% LIE/FS) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **63 (49% LIE/FS) researchers**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2018**	
	L: 60 (40% LIC) researchers M: 80 (40% LIC) researchers H: 100 (40% LIC) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **118 (47% LIE/FS) researchers, 54% women**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**June 2019**	
	L: 60 (40% LIC) researchers M: 80 (40% LIC) researchers H: 100 (40% LIC) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESUL: **139 (47% LIE/FS) researchers, 55% women**

Most of PEP (in class) training workshops are held during the PEP Annual Conferences (2017, 2018 and 2019), including:

- Advanced technical training workshops (CGE/macro, micro, experimental IE, CBMS) – from 1 to 3 days
- One-day workshop to review best practices for policy engagement
- One-day workshop to review best practices and tools for communicating research with non-academic audiences
- Half-day workshop to review best practices for scientific writing

So far, a total of 133 researchers from (shortlisted and/or selected) PAGE II project teams – including 75 women and 61 in LIE/FS – have benefited from these workshops during either one of the 2017, 2018 and/or 2019 PEP Annual Conferences.

Also, in November 2017, an additional 6 researchers – including 1 woman and 4 in LIE/FS – (i.e. counting those who had not participated in a PEP Annual Conference) benefited from further training on use of the CBMS Accelerated Poverty Profiling (APP) tools (tablet-based system) for data collection, generating and digitized (GIS)mapping of CBMS-SDG indicators, and on use of infographics for more effective dissemination of research findings during an international study visit organized and conducted by the CBMS Network Office in Manila, Philippines

For a **total of 139 researchers from 36 countries - 76 (55%) women and 65 (47%) from LIE/FS -** who participated in PEP (in class) training workshops.

The detail demographics of participants in the various training activities held during these events are presented in **ANNEX B**, while the full list of beneficiaries, including conference participants, is presented in **ANNEX C**.

Indicator 1.3	Number of (male/female) researchers who participated in a study visit	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2017**	
	L: 0 researchers M: 0 researchers H: 0 researchers	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2018**	
	L: 9 (40% female) researchers M: 12 (40% female) researchers H: 15 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **LARGELY EXCEEDED** RESULT: **50 (39% female) researchers, 55% in LIE/FS**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2019**	
	L: 37 (40% female) researchers M: 41 (40% female) researchers H: 46 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **LARGELY EXCEEDED** RESULT: **76 (38% female) researchers, 49% in LIE/FS**

As of February 2019, **76 researchers from 44* projects** (32 developing countries) have benefited from a study visit, including **29 women and 37 from LIE/FS**. All but 2 of these visits were "international" – two project teams had visits in their home countries, due to the presence of their PEP mentor.

Another 22 researchers in 4 different countries (12 women, 8 in LIE/FS) have also benefited from one or several field visits from their respective PEP mentors.

One more study visit is expected to take place in January 2020 (PIERI-RCT in Mongolia)

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant, so 43 different research teams.

Indicator 1.4	Number of researchers who have participated in conducting policy analysis using cutting edge methodologies under the supervision/mentoring of PEP resource persons	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**June 2017**	
	L: 10 (40% female) researchers M: 15 (40% female) researchers H: 20 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULTS: **22 (55% female) researchers**
MILESTONE 2 Targets:	**June 2018**	
	L: 50 (40% female) researchers M: 75 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULTS to date: **140 (59% female) researchers, 54% in LIE/FS**

	H: 100 (40% female) researchers	
MILESTONE 3 Targets:	**June 2019**	
	L: 100 (40% female) researchers M: 125 (40% female) researchers H: 150 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULTS to date: **201 (58% female) researchers, 49% in LIE/FS**

As of August 2019, a total of 201 developing country researchers, including 117 women and 98 in LIE/FS, have participated in conducting policy analysis using PEP-fostered research methods, under the supervision/mentoring of PEP resource persons. 139 researchers supported under the 29 projects of Round 1, and 62 under the 16 projects of Round 2.

The full list of individual researchers being supported under the first round of PAGE II is presented in **ANNEX C**, while the list/names of PEP resource persons assigned as scientific mentors to their respective projects are presented in **ANNEX B.**

Indicator 1.5	Number of researchers who have participated in the design and implementation of policy engagement and research communication strategies under the supervision/mentoring of Policy Outreach Committee members	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 researchers M: 0 researchers H: 0 researchers	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Targets:	**December 2017**	
	L: 40 (40% female) researchers M: 50 (40% female) researchers H: 60 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **75 (60% female) researchers, 63% in LIE/FS**
MILESTONE 3 Targets:	**December 2018**	
	L: 80 (40% female) researchers M: 100 (40% female) researchers H: 120 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **135 (56% female) researchers, 52% in LIE/FS**
MILESTONE 4 Targets:	**December 2019**	
	L: 92 (40% female) researchers M: 115 (40% female) researchers H: 138 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **ACHIEVED** RESULT: **135 (56% female) researchers, 52% in LIE/FS**

Another new feature of the PEP Grant Plus program under PAGE II, and parallel to the scientific

support mechanism, is the provision of extended training and mentoring support to assist selected research teams in the design and implementation of effective policy engagement and communication strategies.

In 2017, PEP created a new structure, the Policy Outreach Committee (POC), composed of experts in policy analysis and advocacy/advisory (from different regions), and whose members are being assigned to selected research teams to:

- Evaluate and comment their project's policy context analysis
- Provide guidance to help define effective policy engagement and communication strategies
- Evaluate and comment the dissemination strategy, and advise the policy messaging of findings

As of August 2019, **33 of the selected PAGE II research teams (19 in LIE/FS) have benefited from periodic advisory meetings** with their respective POC mentors - these teams involve a **total of 135 researchers, including 76 (56%) women and 70 (52%) in LIE/FS.**

These 33 teams include:

- **17 of the 29 research teams supported under Round 1**
  - Those who were not assigned a POC mentor include:
    - 8 CBMS and 1 MPIA-ISP project teams, as these activities are advised/ supervised directly by their assigned TRG mentors.
    - 2 PMMA and 1 PIERI project teams involving former grantees from PAGE I, because considered irrelevant (unnecessary) in their particular contexts
  - 14 of the POC-mentored teams have now completed their project and been asked to complete a survey to evaluate their experience of the new PEP program to support policy outreach – see summary of results in **section 3.1.2**
- **All 16 research teams supported under Round 2**

The list/names of POC members assigned as mentors to selected project teams to date are presented in **ANNEX B.**

Indicator 1.6	Number of PEP Research Fellows benefitting from PEP small grants to enhance research capacity and support publication of high quality research outputs.	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 Research Fellows M: 0 Research Fellows H: 0 Research Fellows	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Targets:	**December 2017**	
	L: 2 Research Fellows M: 4 Research Fellows H: 6 Research Fellows	**STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED** **RESULT:** 7 Research Fellows appointed but no grants (at the time, but the grant was awarded

		two months later)
MILESTONE 3 Targets:	**December 2018**	
	L: 4 Research Fellows M: 6 Research Fellows H: 8 Research Fellows	**STATUS: ACHIEVED** RESULT: 7 Research Fellows benefitting from a PEP grant
MILESTONE 4 Targets:	**December 2019**	
	L: 5 Research Fellows M: 7 Research Fellows H: 9 Research Fellows	**STATUS: ACHIEVED** RESULT: 7 Research Fellows benefitting from a PEP grant

Since the beginning of PAGE II, PEP has nominated a **total of 21 PEP Research Fellows,** eligible FOR special grants.

A first call for Research Fellow grant proposals was launched in the fall of 2017, but the project proposal, submitted by 5 of the 7 Fellows selected in 2017, was accepted (and thus awarded a grant) only at the end of February 2018. These 5 Fellows are currently, and "collectively", benefitting from this grant to conduct two separate analyses – one for Brazil and one cross-country using DHS data - to "Examine the Impact of Early Childbearing on Labor Market Outcomes".

A second call was issued in July 2018, and resulted in the selection (in the Fall) of one additional project involving 2 other Research Fellows, for the analysis of "Low Take-up of Social Benefits and Financial Inclusion". Again, multiple, high-level, publications are expected from this project.

For a total of now 7 Research Fellows benefiting from a PEP grant.

In 2018-2019, several Research Fellows have also benefited from PEP support to participate in high-level international conferences, and/or contribute to developing various concept notes, strategies, etc.

Indicator 1.7	Number of grants provided to qualified institutions for building and "institutionalizing" new expertise in Macroeconomic Policy Modelling	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2017**	
	1 institutional grant	**STATUS: ACHIEVED**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2018**	
	2 institutional grants	**STATUS: ACHIEVED** 1 institutional grant + second grant replaced by 2 standard research grants

The first PEP institutionalization project grant was awarded to an institution based in Mongolia, the Economic Research Institute. The project is still underway but near completion, with 4 working papers undergoing external or editorial review before publication, and a 5th one in preparation. The project has also produced 3 PEP policy briefs, and the findings from different analysis/cycles were discussed with policy actors and other audiences in the context of 4 different consultation/dissemination workshops.

Due to cost considerations, as well as to partially offset the effects of Brexit on the overall program outputs, it was decided to replace the second institutional grant with two standard MPIA research project grants, which were awarded as part of the second funding round.

Output 2 - RESEARCH

Selected research teams produce new and scientifically-sound evidence base to inform policy on issues related to inclusive growth, employment and/or women's economic empowerment in targeted countries.

Indicator 2.1	Number of research project proposals approved by TRGs	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 proposals M: 0 proposals H: 0 proposals	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Targets:	**December 2017**	
	L: 20 (40% LIE/FS) proposals M: 22 (40% LIE/FS) proposals H: 25 (40% LIE/FS) proposals	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULTS: **30 (52% LIE/FS) proposals**
MILESTONE 3 Targets:	**December 2018**	
	L: 37 (40% LIC) proposals M: 41 (40% LIC) proposals H: 46 (40% LIC) proposals	STATUS: **ACHIEVED** RESULTS: **48 (44% LIE/FS) proposals approved**

A total of **46* project proposals** (for "standard research grants) **- in 33 developing countries, including 21 (47%) in LIE/FS - have been approved**, by the four PEP TRGs, for support under the two rounds of PAGE II funding, and **also 2 additional proposals for Research Fellow grants** were approved in 2018 – for a **total of 48 proposals**. Find the list of these projects in **ANNEX B.**

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Indicator 2.2	Number of final research reports approved by members of PEP TRGs (soundness of results) and POC (policy relevance)	
MILESTONES 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 reports M: 0 reports H: 0 reports	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 reports M: 0 reports H: 0 reports	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 9 (40% LIC) projects M: 12 (40% LIC) projects H: 15 (40% LIC) projects	**STATUS: EXCEEDED – 18 (50% LIC) projects**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 35 (40% LIC) projects M: 39 (40% LIC) projects H: 43 (40% LIC) projects	STATUS: ONGOING – 44 (46% LIC) projects

As of August 2019, **44 of the 46 project grants*** supported under Round 1 and Round 2 (including **21 in LIE/FS**) have completed their final research reports, which have been approved by the relevant PEP scientific committees (TRGs). The other 2 project teams should complete their reports by the end of the year.

While the POC mentors did not evaluate the research reports per se, they were called on to evaluate and advise on the policy messaging of the research findings (for 33 of the 44 projects, see indicator 1.5) – first through written comments, and followed by a live discussion with the teams.

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Indicator 2.3	Number of research projects published as a PEP working paper (following internal and external review)	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: N/A

MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 9 (40% LIC) projects M: 12 (40% LIC) projects H: 15 (40% LIC) projects	**STATUS: EXCEEDED - 16 (56% LIC) projects**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 35 (40% LIC) projects M: 39 (40% LIC) projects H: 43 (40% LIC) projects	STATUS: ONGOING – 18 (46% LIC) projects
All (44) project grants with approved final reports have also now translated findings into working paper format. The WPs of 18 of these project grants have already been published on the PEP website: www.pep-net.org/working-papers, and those of the other 26 grants are currently undergoing internal, external and/or editorial reviews, and should be published by the end of the year.		

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Indicator 2.4	Number of research papers accepted for publication in highly regarded peer-reviewed journals and other relevant publications (recognized in Research Excellence Framework system), including from PAGE-1 projects	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 1 REF2* (or higher) publication M: 2 REF2* (or higher) publications H: 3 REF2* (or higher) publications	STATUS: **ACHIEVED – medium+** RESULT: **2 REF*3 publications**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 2 REF2* (or higher) publication M: 4 REF2* (or higher) publications H: 6 REF2* (or higher) publications	STATUS: **ACHIEVED - high** RESULT: **6 publications (4 REF*3 and 2 REF*2)**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 3 REF2* (or higher) publication	STATUS: **LARGELY EXCEEDED**

	M: 6 REF2* (or higher) publications H: 9 REF2* (or higher) publications	RESULT: **18 publications (8 REF*2 and 10 REF*3) – 11 from LIC projects**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 7 REF2* (or higher) publication M: 9 REF2* (or higher) publications H: 11 REF2* (or higher) publications	STATUS: ONGOING RESULT: 18 publications (8 REF*2 and 10 REF*3) – 11 from LIC projects

These targets necessarily refer to publications based on (locally-led) research supported as part of previous PEP programs, such as PAGE I (2013-2016), or STAARS.

As of August 2019, and since the beginning of the PAGE II program in 2016, **a total of 19 articles** (based on PAGE I or STAARS projects) have been published or accepted in REF*2 (9) or REF*3 (10) journals – **12 of these publications (5 REF*2, 7 REF*3) are based on projects led in LIE/FS.**

- REF*3 journals include: Journal of Development Studies (4 articles), World Development (4 articles), European Review of Agricultural Economics (1), and Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization (1).
- REF*2 journals include: Environment and Development Economics (5 articles, for a "special issue"), Review of Development Economics (1), Economics of Transition (1), Food Security (1) and Agricultural Economics (1).

Output 3 – POLICY OUTREACH

All selected research teams design and implement effective policy engagement and research communication strategies

Indicator 3.1	Number of research projects designed and conducted in direct consultation with local/national policy makers or stakeholders	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 15 (40% LIC) projects M: 20 (40% LIC) projects H: 25 (40% LIC) projects	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULTS: **27 (50% LIE/FS) projects**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 28 (40% LIC) projects	STATUS: **ACHIEVED**

	M: 37 (40% LIC) projects H: 46 (40% LIC) projects	RESULTS: **46 projects (46% LIE/FS) projects**

In addition to their expected scientific contribution and rigor, all research teams are required to provide evidence that their research project has been designed and conducted in consultation with national policy stakeholders, through periodic (detailed) reports on related activities. Under PAGE II, this is now enforced even further with the new requirement for all (MPIA, PMMA, PIERI) applicants** to develop the project's policy context analysis – including stakeholder mapping/matrix – as well we to present a credible strategy to reach out to and engage with potential users. This strategy (and its implementation) is evaluated and advised by policy experts, from the new PEP Policy Outreach Committee, at different stages of the project cycle.

As a result (and thanks to the improved M&E survey tools), we know that under PAGE II:

- **All (46) supported projects** have been **designed in direct consultations with policy stakeholders.**
- **36 project teams have continued to engage in periodic consultations** with targeted stakeholders, while conducting research

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

**Excluding CBMS since this has always (since 2002) been a requirement/core element of CBMS proposals

Indicator 3.2	Number of research projects with outcomes translated and published into policy brief format	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 9 (40% LIC) projects M: 12 (40% LIC) projects H: 15 (40% LIC) projects	**STATUS: EXCEEDED** RESULTS: **18 (50% LIC) projects**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 37 (40% LIC) projects M: 41 (40% LIC) projects	STATUS: ONGOING RESULTS: 19 (47% LIC) projects

	H: 45 (40% LIC) projects	

As of August 2019, **19 PEP policy briefs** have been published, from 18 PAGE II project grants* (including 9 projects in LIE/FS). Find them here: https://www.pep-net.org/policy-briefs

Another 8 CBMS project grants have submitted their draft policy brief, which are currently in evaluation by CBMS resource persons, and the others (from at least 19 project grants) shall be submitted and reviewed over the next few months.

*1 of the MPIA Institutionalization Project grants resulted in 2 policy briefs.

Indicator 3.3	Number of selected research teams who communicated findings to policy makers/stakeholders during national policy conferences or direct advisory meetings	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	L: 0 teams M: 0 teams H: 0 teams	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 teams M: 0 teams H: 0 teams	STATUS: N/A
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 5 (40% LIC) M: 10 (40% LIC) H: 15 (40% LIC)	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **20 project teams (50% LIE/FS)**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 28 (40% LIC) M: 37 (40% LIC) H: 46 (40% LIC)	STATUS: ONGOING RESULT TO DATE: **28* project teams (44% LIE/FS)**

As of August 2019, we know that **28* project teams have already discussed their findings in person, and officially, with relevant policymakers, either/both in the context of "public events" and/or direct (private) policy advisory meetings.** Among them:

- **15** teams organized **PEP-sponsored national policy conferences**
- **18** teams have also seen their **findings reported by national news media.**

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Output 4 – INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PEP

Completion of the institutionalisation of PEP as a fully functional and effective network organization with its international status and head office based in Kenya

Indicator 4.1	Evaluate and strengthen internal corporate processes for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in grant making and project management	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**December 2016**	
	• Implement new grant finance management system • Complete Annual Audit for 2015	STATUS: **ACHIEVED**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2017**	
	Complete Annual Audit for 2016	STATUS: **ACHIEVED**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2018**	
	• Review HR and Finance policies • Complete Annual Audit for 2017	STATUS: **ACHIEVED**
MILESTONE 4 Target:	**December 2019**	
	• Complete external evaluation of PEP and PAGE II • Complete Annual Audit for 2018	STATUS: **ONGOING** Results to date: 2018 Annual Audit achieved, external evaluation ongoing

The new PEP grant finance management system, developed and put in place at the new PEP office in Nairobi in 2015, has now proven fully operational and efficient.

The 2015 annual audit was completed in March 2016, the 2016 audit in March 2017, the 2017 audit was completed in March 2018, and the 2018 audit was completed in March 2019.. Respective DfID project audits are also complete.

The review of the Financial policies was completed in December 2018, and the review of the Human Resources policies was finalized in early 2019.

The evaluation of PEP was initiated in December 2018, with the first partnership review (AFKI, and later Laval – both completed). And in early 2019, two external evaluators were contracted to conduct the evaluation of both the PAGE II program, and PEP (organization) – this evaluation is still ongoing.

Indicator 4.2	Recruit new Resource Persons to bring new expertise and skills to the PEP network	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2017**	
	L: 1 Resource Person	STATUS: **EXCEEDED**

	M: 2 Resource Persons H: 3 Resource Persons	RESULT: **7 new resource persons** OTHER: **5 Policy Outreach Committee members**
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2018**	
	L: 2 Resource Persons M: 3 Resource Persons H: 4 Resource Persons	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **9 new resource persons** OTHER: **9 Policy Outreach Committee members**
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2019**	
	L: 2 Resource Persons M: 3 Resource Persons H: 4 Resource Persons	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **11 new resource persons** OTHER: **9 Policy Outreach Committee members**

Since the beginning of PAGE II (January 2016), a total of **11 new Resource Persons** (listed below) including 4 women and 6 from developing countries – **4 of which are former PEP grant recipients** - have been recruited to join the different PEP Research Groups and contribute to providing guidance and support to PEP granted research teams.

- MPIA group: Margaret Chitiga (who has since taken over as MPIA Research Director), Olivier Beaumais and Martin Henseler
- PMMA group: Bruno Larue, Bernadette Dia Kamgnia and Francesca Marchetta
- PIERI group: Habiba Djebbari, Guillermo Cruces, Marcos Agurto and Abidoye Babatunde
- CBMS: Felix Ankomah Asante

Find all PEP resource persons here : www.pep-net.org/resource-persons-2

In the context of the PAGE II program, PEP has also recruited **9 experts in policy advisory/advocacy – 4 of them are former PEP grant recipients -** from different regions (all in developing countries), to join the PEP Policy Outreach Committee. Find them here: www.pep-net.org/people/policy-outreach-committee

Indicator 4.3	Recruit new partner institutions to the PEP network to bring new skills and expertise	
MILESTONE 1 Target:	**June 2017**	
	2 new partner institutions	STATUS: **ACHIEVED**

In 2017, PEP recruited and signed MoUs with two new collaborating institutions – Université Le Havre in France and CEDLAS in Argentina – which were appointed to coordinate the MPIA and PIERI groups respectively. Individuals from these institutions acted as TRG leaders and resource persons in PAGE I, and both institutions hosted several study visits of PAGE (I and II) grantees in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

In 2018, a new Research Director, Margaret Chitiga based in South Africa, was appointed to lead the MPIA group, making this the first TRG to be led from Africa. PEP has also signed an MoU for collaboration

with University of Pretoria, home of the new Research Director, and co-organizer of the 2019 PEP Annual Conference.

A Partnership Committee has been formed as part of the PEP Board of Directors, whose members are responsible to review existing partners and also examine potential new partnerships. In addition, a Board nominations committee of the Corporate Membership was formed in 2018 to search for new Board members. The process is now complete.

4.3. Other outputs

Fundraising and visibility

Other outputs related specifically to fundraising and visibility of PEP during the reporting period (September 2018 to February 2019) include:

(i) Development of a new (solicited) project proposal for IDRC, for the extension of PAGE II

(ii) Several meetings were held to discuss potential collaborations with donor organizations, including.

- **UNDP:** Led to sponsorship of the 2019 PEP Annual Conference, and one senior UNDP officer now participating as a PIERI Resource Person.
- **SIDA:** Led to invitation to submit a proposal after open call. A concept note was submitted.
- **ILO:** Ongoing discussion with ILO Youth Employment Funders' Group.
- **GAC:** Led to invitation to submit a concept note/proposal.
- **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation:** discussions are ongoing.
- **NWO/Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**: Led to introduction and contracting of PEP researchers (Africa) to support the donor's mapping exercise
- **Research Council of Norway**: Discussions are ongoing
- **World Bank**: Discussion are ongoing.
- **USAID:** Interested in PEP's work with governments. Discussions are ongoing

(iii) Participation of senior key staff in various conferences and workshops (to present or represent PEP), including:

- Executive Director at
  - Final INCLUDE workshop, Amsterdam – September 2018
  - WIDER Development Conference, Helsinki – September 2018
  - International Safeguarding Summit, UK (online) – October 2018
  - TTI Exchange 2018, Bangkok – November 2018
  - Workshop on "Boosting decent employment for Africa's youth" project, Nairobi – February 2019.
  - "Systematic Review - Evidence and Gap Maps" training workshop, Nairobi – Feb 2019
  - IDRC conference on research in fragile contexts (March 2019, Amman)
  - AERC Senior Policy Seminar on "Fragility of Growth in African Economies" (Harare, March 2019)
  - World Bank Kenya Economic Update launch (April 2019, Nairobi)
  - IDRC INDABA on Innovative Financing/Impact Investing in the Global South (May 2019, Nairobi)

- PASGR International Convening "Towards a Pan-African Transformation: Innovative Approaches to Evidence Uptake and Use in Africa" (May 2019, Nairobi)

- PEP-CBMS Research Director at:
  - ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium on Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Realising Poverty Reduction, Cambodia – August 2018
  - International Workshop on *Addressing Inclusion Among Children & Adolescents living in Poverty: Progress Towards Achieving the SDGs*, New York - October 2018,
- Scientific Advisor at Annual Conference of Global Coalition to End Child Poverty in the UK, in December 2018
- PEP-PIERI Research Director at:
  - Evidence 2018 Conference in Pretoria - September 2018
  - 3ie Conference in Benin - January 2019 – during which was announced the first PEP call for EOI launched under the Hewlett-funded initiative.
- Director of Communications & M&E at:
  - A (regional) high-level policy consultation and training workshop (to strengthen practices related to evidence use in policymaking), Senegal – October 2018
  - 2019 On Think Tank Conference in Geneva - February 2019

- Several donors and partners were invited to, and participated in, the 2019 Annual Conference (Global Affairs Canada, UNDP, UNESCO, Hewlett Foundation and Open Society Foundation, South Africa, IDRC). Also present were several potential collaborating institutions, namely United Nations University - World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-Wider); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); African Economic Research Consortium (AERC); and Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA.

(iv) Continual update of the PEP website and feeding PEP news/social media (Facebook and Twitter). PEP is also working on the development of a new online discussion forum, a first "section" of which was launched in September 2018[29].

V. DISSEMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH BENEFICIARIES / UPTAKE

As demonstrated in the context of the PAGE I program[30], PEP has developed a unique and very effective system to both increase and monitor the engagement of grantees with key policy stakeholders and potential research users at the local/national level.

Periodic consultations with stakeholders is a fixed component of PEP-supported projects, from the onset of the project to the dissemination of its final results, and PEP also provides support for research teams to undertaken activities or initiatives to disseminate/communicate, both broadly and effectively, the outcomes of their research work/findings.

The great majority of selected PAGE II research teams had consulted key policy stakeholders prior to selection - to inform the research questions and general design of their project proposals – and those who hadn't did so in the weeks following their selection, as condition to the release of the first grant payment.

[29] View the platform here: www.pep-net.org/forum/ . The first section to have been publicly launched is dedicated to child poverty, and managed in collaboration with the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty – see: www.pep-net.org/new-online-forum-launches-discussing-child-poverty

[30] Find out more through the series of "PEP impact briefs": www.pep-net.org/pep-impact-stories

In fact, all selected research teams are required to report on these activities periodically, as a condition to continued grant payments – see **section X** below. These reports are being carefully examined by PEP M&E staff (in terms of general credibility) and, in the context of PAGE II, validated through direct interactions with POC mentors[31] (see below).

New features introduced with PAGE II include:

- Increased and more customized guidance – provided through:
  - Instructions and support by PEP staff (communication and M&E) for the development of policy context analysis, including stakeholder mapping/matrix
  - mentorship by experts in the practice of policy advocacy (from the new PEP Policy Outreach Committee)
- Extended "how-to" training in best practices and tools for policy engagement and research communication

As a result,

- **46** projects were **designed in consultation** with local policy (and other) stakeholders
  - **35** project teams reported that the **stakeholders' inputs had been used to influence the design** of the research project
- **36** projects have been conducted **in periodic consultations with policy stakeholders**
- **27** project teams have already **discussed their findings, in person and officially, with policy stakeholders - either/both in the context of "public events" and/or direct (private) policy advisory meetings**
- **39* project** teams managed to **engage stakeholders in dissemination of findings**
- **18** of the completed projects' findings have been **reported by national news media.**
- **15** project teams have reported **official statements** by relevant decision-makers of their **intent to use findings** to inform policy decisions **- and in 3 cases, actual policy decisions/changed have already been influenced** by the said evidence base.

CBMS

In the case of CBMS projects, resource persons from the CBMS Network Office of DLSU-AKI have supported project teams in reaching out to key national government agencies and development partners (i.e. UNDP) to seek support for the country projects.

For instance, the CBMS Network Team was able to secure support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) for the CBMS International Network Policy Conference on *Localizing the SDGs through CBMS*, held in the Philippines on March 13-15, 2019. The Conference featured presentations and discussions of the PAGE II-CBMS Country Project Teams and of how local government units that have adopted CBMS for program implementation in the context of meeting the SDGs. During this 3-day forum, the PAGE II-CBMS project teams also learned from the sharing of best practices and strategies by CBMS partners in the Philippines (from the executive and legislative branches of government) for the institutionalization and uses of CBMS for local planning and other thematic concerns. One of the highlights of the said policy conference was a presentation on the then *proposed CBMS Bill* by the House of Representatives of the Philippines (the CBMS Bill was later enacted into law, in April 17, 2019 via *Republic Act 11315* - institutionalizing CBMS in all cities and municipalities in the country as a tool for implementing poverty reduction and development programs.

[31] In the case of CBMS projects, with support from the CBMS Coordinating Team/mentors

Policymakers from the countries where the PAGE-CBMS projects are being implemented, have also been invited to participate during the CBMS sessions of the 2019 PEP Annual General meeting in Capetown to discuss the results and recommendations of the CBMS thematic studies, and also to explore strategies and prospects for institutionalization of CBMS in these countries. Among those who participated in the 2 day forum were the Deputy Permanent Secretary under the Office of the President of Botswana, the Commissioner on Monitoring and Evaluation under the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda, the Director of National Planning and Development in Togo, the Minister of Decentralisation et de la Réforme Institutionnelle of Burundi, the Murang'a County Director for Gender and Youth Affairs in Kenya, and the Team Leader of Indicative Plan Preparation and Research Directorate National Plan Commission of Ethiopia.

7 of the 8 CBMS project teams have already held national/local policy-oriented dissemination events, and **4 of these projects have resulted in interest to adopt the CBMS methodology** by the concerned government units.

VI. OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Expected outcome of the PAGE programme: "Developing country researchers enabled to influence policymaking"

Outcome indicator 1	**Capacity building:** Number of (male/female) researchers who have learned how to use/apply new tools/methodologies for policy analysis, and to conduct research in consultation with policy stakeholders	
MILESTONE 1	**December 2017**	
Targets:	L: 0 researchers M: 0 researchers H: 0 researchers	STATUS: **N/A**
MILESTONE 2	**December 2018**	
Target:	L: 50 (40% female) researchers M: 75 (40% female) researchers H: 100 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **201 (58% female) researchers, 49% in LIC**
MILESTONE 3	**December 2019**	
Target:	L: 92 (40% female) researchers M: 115 (40% female) researchers H: 138 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **201 (58% female) researchers, 49% in LIC**
Under the PAGE II program, a total of **201 researchers, including 117 women and 98 in LIE/FS** have been developing capacity/acquiring skills to apply new tools/methodologies for policy analysis, and to conduct research in consultation with policy stakeholders, through **the 46* projects supported under 2 funding rounds.** PEP's capacity building model is a "continual learning by doing" approach that ensures beneficiaries		

acquire new knowledge/competencies throughout the whole process – from proposal design through publication (incl. scientific journal submission) and dissemination to non-technical audiences.

So far, only 16 of the project teams selected under Round 1 have completed their research projects, including publication and dissemination of findings/outcomes. The others have mostly completed their research cycle, but are still acquiring new skills through the publication and dissemination phase.

The data collected to date (through the periodic M&E surveys), in relation to the development (and consolidation) of new capacity, shows that:

For research: Nearly all (200) researchers claim to have gained new skills/knowledge in relation to the use of research tools/methods, and among them:

- **151** report to have already **applied the skills/knowledge in other (non-PEP) research work**,
- **131** to have already **transferred this knowledge to peers** at home (via training or mentoring activities).

For policy engagement: 188 researchers claim to have gained new skills/knowledge for engaging and communicating research with policy, and among them:

- **94** report to have already **applied this new knowledge in other (non-PEP) research work**, and
- **74** to have **transferred this knowledge to peers** in their home countries.

For 19 project teams, the expertise gained through PEP has also already **led to successful grant applications**, and thus new research contract/funding opportunities.

Outcome indicator 2	**Research:** Number of completed research projects with new and scientifically-sound evidence base to inform policy in favor of inclusive growth, employment and/or women's economic empowerment	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 projects M: 0 projects H: 0 projects	STATUS: **N/A**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 9 projects M: 12 projects H: 15 projects	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT TO DATE: **18 projects**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 37 projects M: 41 projects H: 46 projects	STATUS: ONGOING RESULT TO DATE: 44 projects with approved final reports

Of the 46* projects supported under the two rounds of PAGE II, 44* have completed their research cycle, with approval of final research reports by the related PEP scientific committees. 18 of these projects have already been published as a PEP working paper (i.e. after review and approval by external referees) and policy brief (in consultation with PEP policy outreach mentors), and the others should have completed the same process by the end of the year.		

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Outcome indicator 3	**Policy outreach:** Number of research teams who have had meetings/interactions with policymakers to discuss/communicate policy findings	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**December 2017**	
	L: 0 teams M: 0 teams H: 0 teams	STATUS: **N/A**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**December 2018**	
	L: 9 teams M: 12 teams H: 15 teams	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **20 teams (50% LIE/FS)**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**December 2019**	
	L: 37 teams M: 41 teams H: 46 teams	STATUS: ONGOING RESULT TO DATE: 28 teams (44% LIE/FS)
As of August 2019, **28* research teams (including 12 in LIE/FS)** have already **discussed their findings, in person and officially, with policy stakeholders, either/both in the context of "public events" and/or direct (private) policy advisory meetings** Several more teams are expected to undertake such dissemination before the end of 2019 (final/dissemination phase) See **ANNEX E.** **N.B. 18 projects** have also been **reported in national news media** (press, television, radio..)		

*Including 2 projects supported under the MPIA institutionalization grant

Expected impact of the PAGE programme: "Evidence-based policymaking promoting inclusive growth and women's economic empowerment"

Impact indicator 1	Number of occurrences of policy design and dialogue informed through PEP-PAGE project evidence and findings in favor of inclusive growth, employment and/or women's economic empowerment	
MILESTONE 1	**June 2017**	
Targets:	L: 0 occurrences M:0 occurrences H: 0 occurrences	STATUS: **N/A**
MILESTONE 2	**June 2018**	
Target:	L: 0 occurrences M:1 occurrences H: 2 occurrences	STATUS: **ACHIEVED** - **1 occurrence**
MILESTONE 3	**June 2019**	
Target:	L: 7 occurrences M:10 occurrences H: 13 occurrences	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** - **15 occurrences (47% in LIE/FS)**

According to the reports produced by the PAGE II teams so far, there has been **15 occurrences (7 in LIE/FS)** of relevant **decision-maker(s) stating, officially, their intent to use the PEP findings to inform policy** – either through direct assimilation into decision processes, or through their own advisory/advocacy work. See below

In several cases, the researchers themselves have been directly involved in the process, through participation in the official policy advisory/formulation meetings. And in 3 countries (Benin, Macedonia and Serbia), actual policy decisions/changes have already been influenced or made based on the evidence base.

- **Benin**: This team's findings have already been used (uptake) as inputs to inform, and influence, the ongoing revision of the policy on "Technical Education and Vocational Training". The researchers are participating in this process through a policy discussion group created by the Minister of SMEs and Employment, following his interactions with the team throughout the project cycle. See poster of impact story
- **Burkina Faso:** Several high-level policy actors (including the Minister of Women Affairs herself, a special advisor to the Prime Minister, as well as key officials from the Ministry of Agriculture) have stated their intent to either use of promote the team's findings (regarding the positive impact of subsidizing agricultural capital for women) as evidence base to inform the related policy making/advisory processes.
- **Burkina Faso**: Another team in Burkina Faso with similar results on the same issue (i.e. women's access to agricultural capital) has also managed to mobilize high-level support from the Directorate in charge of Regulation and Security of Land Tenure, both through their own

use and for the strategic dissemination of their findings amidst government institutions.

- **Ghana**: Through their interactions with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (including the Deputy Minister and other key advisor) that the results of their study (regarding the need to stimulate/favor participation of farmers in non-farm activities) will serve as inputs in the review of the agricultural policy "METASIP III" (2018-2021).
- **Niger**: The General Secretary of the 3N initiative has stated his intention to use the evidence to inform the program's strategies and interventions related to the management of agricultural water – the process/details of which will be discussed in a forthcoming meeting between the GS and the team.
- **Macedonia**: In the context of a direct advisory meeting with the team, the Minister of Labor and Social Policy has stated her intent to use the team's recommendations (regarding potential measures to mitigate the negative effects of underemployment) to inform changes to be made in the national "Law on Volunteering" as well as the design/implementation of the pilot "Youth Guarantee Programme".
- **Occupied Palestinian Territory**: In their context of their consultations with the Director of Strategies and Policies of the Ministry of Women Affairs, the latter indicated that he intends to use the findings to devise and support his recommendations of policy measures to enhance labor force participation for educated women – esp. the provision of incentives to the private sector to employ more women (gender balanced employment).
- **Uruguay**: The team's findings have been acknowledged by high-level officials from various government institutions (including the Minister of Labor and Social Security) and other national agencies, as necessary inputs to help (re)define policy measures related to collective bargaining and formalization of domestic work. The researchers have been asked to take part in the related discussions/working group with/by the Tripartite Commission for Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment (CTIOTE). See poster of impact story
- **Serbia**: In her announcement broadcast by the national press, the Commissioner for Protection of Citizens said that she will be submitting to the parliament a regular annual report on equality and will recommend abolishing or amendment of the law on the maximum number of employees in the public sector because women were hit the most by these measures. This was a key finding by the team.
- **Peru**: Following the team's finding that Beca18 fellows can diffuse new technologies effectively (in their case electronic money technology), the Executive Director of the National Program of Academic Awards and Student Loans – PROBANEC- committed to take this into account during the current redesign of the Beca18 program, a program that facilitates access to post-secondary studies for impoverished high school graduates.
- **Ghana**: Based on another Ghanaian team's recommendation that the fertilizer subsidy program should be implemented as planned and if possible extended beyond its planned implementation period, the Director, Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Ministry of Food and Agriculture promised to share the study findings with the presidency. She was very excited about the study and noted that it "provides a sense of direction to the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) program".
- **Uganda**: The Chief Administrative Officer, Katakwi District Local Government, appreciated the team's findings on youth employment strategies and indicated that they were going to use them for effective service delivery. The local government officials in Katakwi district showed interest and received training on utilizing the CBMS methodology for local planning and governance.

- **Kenya**: The chief officers in the departments of planning, youth and gender affairs in the Murang'a county government found the team's findings among them the SDG profile useful for targeted development planning. They have committed to adopt the CBMS methodology having understood it after involvement in its implementation during the study.
- **Gambia**: The First Deputy Governor, Central Bank of The Gambia, confirmed that the Central of The Gambia is in the process to formulate the first financial inclusion strategy for The Gambia and that some of the team's findings on the effect of discounted withdrawal fees on mobile money usage are relevant for the digital finance aspect of the policy.
- **Argentina**: Guillermo Cruces' (a PEP Research Fellow) work on social benefits and financial inclusion in Argentina was useful for the analysis of the VAT refund program for purchases with debit cards by beneficiaries of national social programs. According to an officer in the Argentina's Treasury, the work identified key factors of its effectiveness, as well as its shortcomings, and contributed to its reformulation in the framework of what is now called "ANSES Benefits".

Several other teams should be able to report further developments in this regard, as a result of forthcoming meetings and/or conferences (including the PEP national policy conferences) scheduled to take place over the coming months (dissemination phase).

More information on these "stories", as well as on the achievements of all other PAGE II teams is provided in **ANNEX E**.

Impact indicator 2	Number of (male/female) researchers who experience important career advancement, exposure and/or increased involvement in policy processes at the national level, as a result of their PEP-PAGE project	
MILESTONE 1 Targets:	**June 2017**	
	L: 0 (40% female) researchers M: 0 (40% female) researchers H: 0 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **N/A**
MILESTONE 2 Target:	**June 2018**	
	L: 6 (40% female) researchers M: 10 (40% female) researchers H: 14 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: **37 (51% female) researchers, 35% LIC**
MILESTONE 3 Target:	**June 2019**	
	L: 30 (40% female) researchers M: 50 (40% female) researchers H: 70 (40% female) researchers	STATUS: **EXCEEDED** RESULT: 93 **(55% female) researchers, 47% LIC**

As of August 2019, **93 researchers** - including 51 women and 44 in LIE/FS – reported to have already **experienced at least one major career-promoting event** as a result of their involvement in this PEP project. 77 **of these researchers** (including 42 women and 35 in LIE/FS) reported that the events in

question would lead to their **increased influence or involvement in policy processes**.

Moreover, **19 projects have resulted in new research funding/contracts,** awarded to one or several team members through successful grant applications, due (at least in part) to their PEP-PAGE II project/training

VII. COSTS, VALUE FOR MONEY AND MANAGEMENT

7.1. Costs (DFID reporting)

Financial narrative report – From January 15, 2016 to July 31, 2019

Total revenues (past balance plus new disbursements) received as at January 31 2019 were GBP 5,106,216 (about US$ 6,845,956). Total expenses were US$ 5,749,405 (about GBP 4,401,307), leaving a balance of US$ 1,096,552 (about GBP 704,909). The two tables below give more details, they provide the expenditure in USD, PEP's functional reporting currency and the equivalent in British Pounds.

Report in USD

	Budget	Expenditure	Balance
	USD*	USD	USD
Research grants	2,719,400	2,187,878	531,522
Staff Salaries	3,375,503	2,506,870	868,633
International Travel	529,000	359,122	169,878
Research Supplies	92,000	34,098	57,902
Indirect Costs/ Overhead (13%)	873,067	661,436	211,631
Totals	**7,588,970**	**5,749,405**	**1,839,565**

*Adjusted to the actual exchange rates for funding translations and projected rate of GBP/USD of 1.30 assumed for the remaining period

Report in GBP

	Budget	Expenditure	Balance
	GBP	GBP	GBP
Research grants	2,060,629	1,668,583	392,046
Staff Salaries[1]	2,533,170	1,925,414	607,756
International Travel	478,989	274,760	204,228
Research Supplies	59,955	26,203	33,752
Indirect Costs	667,257	506,345	160,911
Totals	**5,800,000**	**4,401,307**	**1,398,693**

1 This includes costs paid to resource persons mentoring the research teams

7.2. Value for money

Most PEP-PAGE research grants are provided on a lump-sum, fixed amount ($US 22,000) basis through a competitive call for proposals (to obtain the best possible projects in terms of feasibility, policy/scientific

contribution, capacity building, etc. for this amount). These research grants are complemented by a series of publication and professional development grants.

Grants are released in a series of installments, each of which is tied to the satisfactory delivery of specific outputs (e.g. approved proposal, interim and final research reports, data collection instruments, database, working paper/policy brief, national policy conference, etc.) and submission of regular updates of the projects' technical reports (refer to **section X)** – as stated in the PEP Research Support Grant Contracts.

Additional grants are provided for data collection in projects using RCT or CBMS techniques, based on detailed, approved budgets. The institutionalization project also has a distinct budget to fund a series of field visits by PEP mentors and policy consultation/dissemination activities.

The performance measures for the PAGE programme's "value for money" have been determined as follows:

- **Use of best available partners and resources, based worldwide**

  The effectiveness of PEP's unique global partnership and networking structure – involving research institutions and experts based all around the world – has again been proven through the successful:

  - Creation and implementation of a new series of online courses in different methods of development research, as a result of collaborative work among a group of PEP resource persons based in different countries
  - Launch of the PAGE II calls for proposals throughout the developing world (resulting in submission of 467 proposals from 80+ developing countries – including 181 proposals from LIE/FS)
  - Interactive processing and review (comment/advise) of these proposals by PEP administrative staff and PEP-affiliated experts (resource persons and other evaluators/advisors), all based in different countries and regions around the world.
  - Creation of a new structure composed of experts in the practice of policy advocacy, based in different regions of the world, in order to provide a new type of advisory in policy engagement and communication that is both customized (informed of the country-specific contexts of beneficiaries), and coordinated through a set of common standards and objectives.
  - Gathering of dozens of experts from around the world at PEP Annual Conferences to discuss emerging issues related to development research and contribute to advising the work (and thus strengthening the capacity, including through the provision of advanced training workshops) of promising developing country researchers.

- **Focus on capacity building and/in priority countries**

  Both the PEP competitions (grant selection process) and research support mechanism are focused on the dual objective of 1) producing high-quality research outputs, while 2) maximizing the capacity built in the process. When selecting a research project for support, PEP evaluators simultaneously apply criteria of scientific rigor/contribution and of potential for capacity building – to only select beneficiaries who will truly benefit from the training and support to be provided by PEP.

  In the context of PAGE II, PEP has made a particular effort to advertise its calls for proposals more aggressively in low-income economies (LIEs) and fragile and/of conflict-affected situations (FS), where the capacity is known to be lowest. These efforts resulted in a relatively high proportion (39%) of

submissions from these countries, and in the end exceeding the overall objective (of 40%) with a total of 46% PAGE II projects supported being led in LIE/FS.

All longlisted applicants to PEP calls for proposals benefited from detailed/tailored comments and recommendations in terms of scientific and technical performance (of proposal design), by PEP evaluators.

In the context of PAGE II, shortlisted applicant team members also benefited from (and were required to participate in – except for CBMS) PEP's new online courses. For each team with at least two members who successfully completed the relevant online course, two members (rather than one, as in the past) were invited to attend the PEP annual conference, where they also participated in a PEP School (intensive and advanced training in the use/application of the relevant research methodologies). In 2017, PEP also introduced new types of training for policy engagement (see below) and scientific writing/publication, for the benefit of all attending researchers. And of course, the unique PEP Grant Plus mechanism (i.e. through ongoing/distance mentoring and international peer-review) is known for its effectiveness in strengthening research capacities of its beneficiaries, so as to level the playing field with their northern counterparts.

Finally, and for the past few years, PEP has devoted increased efforts to simultaneously build the researchers' capacity to link their research work with policy at the national level. In the context of PAGE II, the grantees did only benefit from extended "how-to" training in policy engagement and research communication, but also from a new type of mentoring support (from experts based in the same region or country) to help design and implement effective strategies for policy outreach and research uptake.

- **Guarantee of scientific rigor/quality of outputs – Competitive selection, ongoing scientific support and peer review**

All PAGE II project proposals were selected on a highly competitive basis, through several rounds of evaluation, revisions, and based on a variety of criteria (including technical feasibility, policy relevance and responsiveness, capacity building, scientific contribution, etc.), as determined by world-renowned experts and lead researchers in the relevant methodologies and issues.

In addition to receiving intensive training in the specific methods to be applied in their projects, as well as in best practices for scientific writing, each of the selected research teams were appointed a mentor (expert in the relevant research method/s) and placed under the supervision of one of the PEP research group committees[32] (composed of 3-5 PEP resource persons and one coordinator) to monitor and support their progress and evaluate their project's outputs, throughout the research cycle. This process culminates with the review of each project's final publications (working papers) by external referees.

Finally, beyond their publication in the PEP Working Paper series, mentors also normally assist grantees to prepare articles to submit for publication into high-level international scientific journals.

- **Broad geographic/global coverage**

As of August 2019, PEP has supported 320 projects in 64 different developing countries, mostly in Africa (46%), Asia (29%) and Latin America (18%), but also in Eastern Europe (3%) and the Middle East (4%) - 36% of all PEP projects/researchers are in LIE/FS. Through the PAGE II program alone, 45 research

[32] See : www.pep-net.org/research-committees

project teams have been supported in 33 different countries – and 21 (46%) of these projects are in LIE/FS.

- **Policy relevance of research agenda/outputs**

  The policy relevance of the projects to be supported under PAGE II is ensured mainly by:
  - The list of priority policy issues, identified as especially relevant to address specific knowledge gaps and policy needs in terms of evidence base in developing countries
  - The review of each finalist proposal against criteria of responsiveness to expressed policy needs through:
    - the development and submission of a detailed policy context analysis (including stakeholder mapping/matrix), as well as
    - the report (including evidence) of the team's consultations with relevant policy stakeholders, and description of their assimilation of policy inputs.
  - The customized guidance of mentors with experience in policy advocacy, from each project's region, to assist in the design and implementation of effective policy engagement strategy, as well as in the review of projects' outputs (policy messages).

- **Local embedding and perspective**

  Beyond the general correspondence of the project's topic with the call's priority policy issues, the identification of the specific policy research issues to be addressed by the different country studies has been led by the individual applicants, in consultation with national/local stakeholders (see above).

- **Long-term impact (through policy influence and promotion of Southern/local expertise)**

  The long-term impact of PEP projects is ensured through:
  - the creation of new linkages between research and policy in beneficiary countries - as a recurrent result of PEP's requirements in terms of policy engagement.
  - increased acknowledgement and subsequent "use" of local researchers' expertise
  - increased capacity of local experts to communicate their findings and inform relevant policy debates and processes
  - better-informed policies in favor of inclusive growth, poverty reduction and development

  Find out about the long-term impact of previous PEP-PAGE projects here www.pep-net.org/page-i-2012-2016 and here www.pep-net.org/pep-impact-stories; early reports on the impact of the PAGE II projects are also available in **section III** and **ANNEX E**.

Furthermore, to ensure continual value for money of the overall PAGE II programme:

- Combining two major events – the PEP "Schools" (in-class training workshops) and Annual Conferences – and inviting up to two members to participate (versus 1 in PAGE I) ensures value for money by allowing a larger basin of researchers and resource persons to benefit in both of these activities – so far, this includes more than half (133) of the (201) researchers supported under PAGE II.

- The creation of online courses is a new initiative to provide high-level training to a maximum of researchers at the lowest possible cost. As of August 2019, 429 developing country researchers and/or policy analysts[33] have benefited from the new PEP online courses.
- PEP has developed – and continues to improve – a sophisticated intranet system to monitor the progress and administrative follow-up on all research grants – see **section X** below. This also includes PEP's highly-developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, which allows to monitor each teams' initiatives and achievements related to their project, beyond the research work (capacity building, consultation, dissemination, impact, etc.) as well as the scheduled achievement of each project's milestones
    - Combined, the intranet and M&E systems makes it possible to:
        - draw new lessons from PEP's work and communicate these to PEP staff, partners and researchers.
        - have continuous and simultaneous tracking of different kinds of achievements and specific targets, such as those set out in the PAGE II programs' logframe and incentive systems.
        - manage a great number of projects, simultaneously and around the world, with only a few employees, operating from different countries and regions.

VIII. WORK PLAN & TIMETABLE

Refer to **ANNEX D** for detailed timetables and calendars for all activities to be undertaken in the context of the PAGE II program. A few changes were introduced in the calendars of certain TRGs, but none of which will the affect achievement of PAGE II milestones/targets.

The implementation of the PAGE II program's calendar of activities has been going as planned, and all outputs are expected to be achieved as scheduled. In fact, several of them already are, and often exceeded, as detailed in the logframe: see **ANNEX A**.

IX. RISK

9.1. List of previously identified risks (mitigations and changes)

The main risks identified as part of the PAGE II proposal consisted in:

a. Potential interruptions and/or withdrawals of projects selected for support – e.g. due to external reasons/factors, scientific infeasibility (historically, PEP has been able to limit this to less than 5% of PEP-funded projects).
   In order to mitigate this risk, PEP ensures close monitoring of each supported project team's progress and activities, simultaneously by PEP scientific (mentors and resource persons, also supervised by program coordinators), communications and administrative staff. As of August 2019, no PAGE II

[33] These include 104 applicants to a recent PEP call for government mentorship projects launched as the Hewlett-funded program to "strengthen impact evaluation capacities in West & Central Africa". These applicants were required to take part in a short online course, focused on experimental IE methods.

projects have been interrupted or withdrawn – despite, in some cases, major disruptions in socio/political contexts, or team leadership/composition. I

In some cases, PEP had to apply a penalty (reduction of cash grant payment amounts) for delays in submission of required deliverables (see penalty policy). In one other case, the team leader was replaced due to non-compliance with contract terms and PEP rules regarding inclusive participation of all team members. These measures allowed PEP to avoid interruption of any PAGE II projects.

b. Supported researchers do not obtain the necessary visas to attend training activities, meetings and study visits (historically, this can be accommodated through intensified distance support).

PEP's secretariat provides support letters and engages with researchers well in advance of all activities to ensure visa applications are submitted in a timely manner. When all else fails and a researcher misses an activity, historically this has been accommodated through intensified distance support. As of August 2019, there has been only 1 (1) occurrence of rejected visa applications for study visit participants (in Canada), and the special case of shortlisted applicants in Pakistan who were not allowed entry in India, for the 2018 PEP Annual Conference (where they were supposed to present their proposals). In the latter case, the TRGs organized Skype meetings with the teams to discuss the proposals, outside of the conference. PEP's online approach, and especially the introduction of online courses, greatly reduces the negative effects related to this risk.

c. Non-compliance of supported researchers in translating their research findings into publishable material, or in taking the necessary measures/initiatives to contact/consult with policy makers and stakeholders (this is monitored/supported continuously through PEP's proposal evaluation and technical report system to allow timely interventions).

In case of non-compliance, PEP systematically withholds grant payments and makes sure that all team members are sent the periodic/recurrent reminders. Requirements have been spelled out even more carefully in PAGE-II contracts and all research team members and their mentor are required to co-sign and mentorship agreement committing them to jointly seek to publish a working paper and journal article based on their PEP project. No such cases have occurred to date in PAGE II.

d. Non-compliance of supported researchers in taking necessary measures/initiatives to contact and consult with policy makers/stakeholders. Unavailability and non-cooperativeness of policy makers/stakeholders in acknowledging the researchers' work and findings, and taking part in consultation/dissemination activities.

Consultation and dissemination activities are continuously monitored by the PEP Communication and M&E team – in case of non-compliance by the research teams, grant payments are withheld. Furthermore, in PAGE II, the research teams benefit from the individual guidance of mentors throughout the process of identifying and engaging with key stakeholders. As of August 2019, nearly all PAGE II research projects have been designed in consultation with key policy stakeholders, and the great majority have also engaged in periodic consultations with these stakeholders (to report/provide updates on progress and/or policy needs).

9.2 New risks identified (over the course of PAGE II)

New conditions by IDRC requires researchers in some countries to obtain clearance from their governments for nationals to conduct research before PEP can release the grants. This has in some instances led to some unexpected delays in the early stages of projects.

Also, depreciation of the British pound in 2016 and 2017 resulted in the reduction of the number of grants to be supported through the program (from 50 to 46).

9.3 Risk of funds not being used as intended

There is no reason to expect this.

9.4 Climate and Environment Risk: N/A

9.5 Current assessment of the overall risk level for the programme: Low

X. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2011, PEP created an innovative, web-based "Monitoring and Evaluation System[34]" to assess both the progress and impact of its supported projects, not only in terms of research and scientific outputs, but also capacity building, promotion of local expertise, and policy outreach.

The system is based on an online (intranet) "technical report" (which comprises a total of 6 forms, to report on different aspects of their PEP project), that must be completed by all team members at different stages of the research cycle, enabling supervising bodies to quickly assess whether all recommended initiatives have been undertaken, initial strategies are being implemented and achievement of objectives is on track. The integration of the report in PEP's intranet system also allows the systematic compilation of data, statistics and report, which are available at all times – as presented in **section VI** of this report.

The technical report forms were designed to collect information regarding the achievement of a list of specific performance indicators, designed to assess the progress and impact of PEP activities in various areas – the choice of these indicators is based not only on existing relevant literature, but also on the cumulated experience of previous PEP projects. In 2017, PEP also expanded the list of indicators monitored through the technical report, so as to provide more detailed assessments of the impact and performance of PEP projects, especially in terms of capacity building and policy outreach, in line with the new incentive system agreed upon with IDRC.

The information and data collected from the projects' technical reports is used to feed the progress reports to donors. Ultimately, these reports provide crucial information on the main successes and challenges encountered in the realization of PEP's global initiatives - which often comprise a great number of individual projects or country studies, such as the PAGE II programme - as a sum of its components, to draw important lessons for future strategies. The new (2017) system also allows to compare performance between projects and groups of projects, through a new scoring system associated with each category of indicators/impact – see results discussed in **ANNEX F** (to be submitted by end of March 2019).

Finally, the M&E system enables PEP to collect and compile qualitative information and testimony regarding each of the supported project's impact and ramifications at the national level, in the concerned countries[35] - see **section IV** and **ANNEX E**.

[34] Find out more : https://www.pep-net.org/evaluation
[35] Find examples from previous projects here: https://www.pep-net.org/pep-impact-stories

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Online courses:

Several adjustments have been made in the conduct of the online courses to adapt to various challenges, including measures to:

- Allow/facilitate the conduct of individualized evaluations at a distance
- Ensure the full translation (French, English) of both the courses contents and related web platform
- Simplify the course registration process
- Ensure the self-sustainability of the courses (no budget had been included in the PAGE-II funding) by opening to paying public participants.
    - A $500 fee per course, for a limited number of participants, resulted in covering 80% of the cost in 2018. In 2019, the limit (of participants) was removed and the fee increased to $600, such that a small surplus (albeit excluding the cost of PEP staff) is anticipated for this ongoing edition.
- Increase the number of beneficiaries by making most video capsules freely accessible[36] to the public through PEP's YouTube Channel[37].

Finally, in their evaluations of the courses (so far), roughly 90% of students have provided favorable or very favorable responses to survey questions regarding different aspects of the service. While the pass rate of 89% (for the 1st and 2nd edition) was far above the norm for online courses, the latest edition's pass rate (72%) was closer to normal but still quite high.

In 2019, PEP has received additional funding from IDRC (as part of the 3rd funding round of PAGE II) to develop a new online course on gender analysis, as well to integrate a gender module in each of the other (existing) courses. PEP will continue to explore possibilities to develop new courses with outside funding, starting with a course on child well-being.

Supporting high-quality, policy engaged research in fragile contexts

PEP activities are increasingly concentrated in low-income economies and fragile contexts. Since 2013, 46% of PEP projects and researchers have been supported in these countries. The key lessons drawn from this experience include:

- The need for a well-designed strategy, and tools, to link local with global.
    - PEP's strategy in this regard essentially relies on "technology" (a sophisticated online approach to both project management and capacity building), and "travel" (providing strategic opportunities for traditionally isolated researchers to meet and work with peers and experts from around the world).
- The importance of careful selection, early planning and continual monitoring of projects. PEP's experience shows that:
    - When selecting grants through a competitive call, it is appropriate to adapt requirements related to the background of LIE/FS applicants, especially in terms of academic level, as well as to carefully consider the qualities of the proposed team leaders (in terms of leadership and training/mentoring skills).

[36] The course fee will continue to be applied to participants requiring personalized instructor support, access to the course discussion forum, evaluations and transcripts/diplomas.

[37] Find them here: www.youtube.com/user/PEPvideochannel/playlists?view=50&sort=dd&shelf_id=6

- Mentors advising the development of project proposals from LIE/FS should consider the potential occurrence of "contingencies", both in the project's design and calendar of milestones.
- Continual monitoring of project teams is key to ensuring the sustained efforts, progress/pace and quality of the work (and thus resulting in high-quality outputs) throughout the project cycle.

- The need to apply "cautious flexibility". PEP's experience also suggests that:
  - In general, expectations and requirements (e.g. deadlines and quality standards, policy outreach, etc.) applied to LIE/FS teams should be the same as any others; indeed, in most cases these projects have proven to perform just as well, and often better, than those led in more "facilitating environments".
  - What matters is the relative level of initial capacity in the specific method to be used in the project; in such cases PEP should adapt by providing additional mentoring, training, etc. but may not expect to achieve the same level/ratio of journal publications for example.
  - Contingencies are more likely to occur in these countries, and in such cases it is important to have the flexibility to extend project duration. PEP generally tries to include more LIE/FS projects in the early rounds of its programs, in case more time is required. However, the decision should be made after careful analysis of the situation's actual effect on the research work.

General assessment

Generally speaking, with the substantive and positive developments within PEP, as an institution, over the past year, there is very high confidence in the successful delivery of PAGE II. Moreover, with the strength and stability provided by its evolved structure, PEP is now in a position to develop and implement fundraising strategies, and to promote its achievement and visibility to new potential donors.

PEP has submitted a series of applications for the incentive system grants to both IDRC and DFID in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and all have been approved so far. We fared best with the 2018 application relative to 2017 and 2019 for DFID's incentive system grant, due to a growing number of high-level publications from projects led in LIE/FS countries over the past years. However, this particular requirement (to limit the submitted research papers to projects in LIE/FS) significantly reduces the number of projects that can be considered as part of this evaluation (roughly 40-50% of all PEP projects), and also limits this number to those conducted in the most challenging environments. This explains the reduced number of REF 3* articles submitted as part of the 2019 application to DFID incentive grant – i.e. the majority of REF 3* publications in 2018-2019 were from non-LIE/FS projects.

Finally, the program has been challenged with the depreciation of the British Pound, which resulted in a significant loss in program funding. This has affected the total output of PAGE II, upon agreement with DFID, with the reduction of the total number of grants to be allocated/supported in the second round, as well as various cost-saving adjustments in initially planned activities.

XII. FURTHER INFORMATION

11.1. Theory of change - Nothing to add.

11.2 Research methods - Nothing to add.

11.4 Other or supplementary information - Nothing to add.

List of annexes

A. **Logframe**
B. **Overview statistics and list of selected projects**
C. **List of individual beneficiaries to date**
D. **Timetable**
E. **Overview and impact of individual selected projects**
F. **Application for IDRC incentive grant** – Evaluation of performance in capacity building and policy outreach (to be submitted by September 30, 2019)