



Joint Memorandum of 18 Policy Research Institutes Research Independence and Knowledge Production of Indonesia

A sustainable research ecosystem requires support of various parties involved. There are four interrelated actors to ensure that research products can have an impact on policy implementation. First, knowledge producers, for example researchers, academics, and think tanks. Second, knowledge enablers, such as regulatory agencies and funding agencies. Third, knowledge intermediaries, namely media, policy analysts, and civil society organizations. Fourth, knowledge users, such as government and legislative institutions (Hertz et al, 2020¹).

On the knowledge producer side, apart from government research institutions and universities, there are think tanks, which are also often referred to as independent research institutions (*Lembaga Riset Independen*, LRI). Apart from producing knowledge through research and studies for policy recommendations, LRIs process and distribute research results into popular language to make them more accessible to the public and policymakers. This dual role puts LRIs in a very strategic position to convey ideas and innovations to promote policy change.

Seeing this strategic role, the National Development Planning Agency (*Bappenas*), which plays a role in coordinating and formulating national development planning policies (Presidential Decree (*Perpres*) 81/2021), and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) as the state institution tasked with integrating research, development, assessment, and application, as well as invention and innovation (*Perpres* 78/2021), need to see LRIs as partners that produce quality studies and are able to support policy research and development. The establishment of BRIN serves as momentum to promote the use of research as a basis for policymaking and development. BRIN can involve LRIs and other research actors who have played a role in their respective capacities, both at the national and regional levels.

¹ Hertz, JC, Brinkerhoff, DW, Bush, R, and Karetji, P (2020) 'Knowledge Systems: Evidence to Policy Concepts in Practice', Policy Brief, June 2020, RTI Press Publication No. PB-0024-2006. <https://doi.org/10.3768/rtipress.2020.pb.0024.2006>

LRI needs to have space and trust to play a role in formulation of evidence-based policies. LRIs have the experience and networks to conduct research and convey results to stakeholders. The presence of LRIs can complement BRIN's role, especially in the context of knowledge production in social science and humanities. Therefore, it is necessary to build a partnership between BRIN and LRIs to promote knowledge-based policies.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

Initial steps in building the partnership have been initiated. LRIs and BRIN, in this case through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Organisation (*Organisasi Riset Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial dan Humaniora*, OR IPSH), have held a series of initial discussions since late 2021 until early 2022. These discussions still need to be continued to narrow down a partnership model to be agreed upon, while identifying potential existing challenges and obstacles.

In Indonesia, there are a number of challenges and obstacles in promoting coordination and cooperation across the research and development system (Aminullah, 2020²; Siregar, 2020³; Ekatjahjana et al, 2019⁴, Pellini et al., 2018⁵). These challenges and obstacles relate to aspects of research independence and knowledge collaboration in knowledge systems that recognize dynamic interactions between actors involved. Research independence and knowledge collaboration can be hampered by regulations that are not supportive and have the potential to limit movements of the actors involved, for example, those related to research permits.

RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE

To spell out the potential challenges and obstacles in research coordination to be anticipated together, the definition of research independence needs to be first agreed upon. There are many opinions about research independence. From these opinions, there are aspects that can demonstrate how research can be called independent, including:

- 1 | Research actors, both individuals and research institutions, have the freedom to determine their own research topics, research objectives, research methodologies, how research is carried out, and how research results are managed, from data documentation to publication.
- 2 | Research is carried out by following a methodology that had been determined from the start, regardless of results of the research later.
- 3 | The determined research methodology and process must be accountable. The research must be open to examination both academically and by the public, and open to different opinions.
- 4 | There is ethical clearance from the start of the research process. Additionally, research must adhere to universal values and principles, for example those related to human rights.
- 5 | There is flexibility for research actors to choose research subjects, including to address certain issues, for example GEDSI (gender equality, disability, and social inclusion), environment, marginalized groups, poor groups, as well as not to address a particular issue. The internal gatekeeping mechanism of research institutions can safeguard research independence from a position of partiality or impartiality in determining research subjects.

² Aminullah, E (2020) 'STI policy and R&D governance for the attainment of SDGs: Envisioning the Indonesia's future', *Asian Journal of Technology Innovation*, 28 (2) Routledge, 204-233.

³ Siregar, Fajri (2020) 'Utility over Excellence: Doing Research In Indonesia' in Kraemer-Mbula et al, *Transforming Research Excellence: New Ideas from the Global South* (African Minds, 2020), <http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/AMT-Research-Excellence-FINAL-WEB-02012020.pdf>

⁴ Ekatjahjana, W, Heilmann, D & Hauerstein, K (eds.) (2019) *Regulatory Reform in Indonesia, A Legal Perspective*, Hanns Seidel Foundation with The Ministry of Law and Human Rights and Directorate General of Legislation, Jakarta.

⁵ Pellini, A, Pramusinto, A & Fatoni, I (2018) 'Brokering Knowledge and Policy Analysis Within the Indonesian Public Sector', in A Pellini et al. (eds.) *Knowledge, Politics and Policymaking in Indonesia*, Springer Nature, Singapore 47-64

KNOWLEDGE COLLABORATION

Collaboration as a key strategy to promote a good research ecosystem must be carried out while maintaining research independence. For that, several important notes must be considered:



1 Research independence must be maintained at every stage of collaboration, from planning, implementation, utilisation, to publication.



2 There needs to be clear and agreed rules from the start regarding collaboration to be carried out to serve as a common guideline during collaboration. The rules facilitate and provide flexibility for researchers to conduct research.



3 There needs to be a division of roles as well as determination of role boundaries among collaborators.

TARGETED POLICY FRAMEWORK

Seeing the importance of research independence and collaboration, policies must be put in place to guarantee, promote, and facilitate knowledge collaboration that supports the principle of research independence. In this regard, there are a number of important notes:



1 The right to collaborate and maintain research independence is guaranteed in the 1945 Constitution, particularly in Article 28 regarding the right to association and the right to express opinions. For this reason, research collaboration must be seen as part of civil rights that must be guaranteed. All policies related to research must not conflict with the 1945 Constitution.



2 Therefore, there needs to be a more operational policy that contains basic principles to ensure a mechanism for collaboration and research independence. This policy needs to be outlined in a regulatory framework including institutional arrangements and accountability mechanisms. This policy should not be rigid or excessive, and should open up the space for innovation and participation.



3 Policies related to research need to provide certainty, convenience, and flexibility for individuals and research institutions to conduct research, access research funds, collect research data, process research results, encourage policies, and conduct research collaboration, while protecting independence of researchers and strengthening research institutions.



4 In view of the enactment of Law Number 11 of 2019 regarding the National System of Science and Technology (*UU Siskas Iptek*), a regulatory framework as part of policies to encourage collaboration and ensure research independence can be stated in government regulations or other regulations that are derived from the National System of Science and Technology Law.



5 As with academic freedom or freedom of press, research freedom that is accompanied by a code of ethics for researchers is needed. This code of ethics serves to maintain the independence of the researchers. This code of ethics also ensures that researchers continue to follow scientific methods that can be accounted for, like a journalistic code of ethics that journalists must follow.



RECOMMENDATION

Recognizing independence as a driving force for researchers and their research, and understanding the importance of collaboration as a key strategy for advancing the research ecosystem in Indonesia, 18 organizations that gathered for a focus group discussion on 18 March 2022 submitted the following recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia through Bappenas and BRIN:



1 Need for policies to protect and ensure independence of researchers, both as individuals and groups, to carry out their research independently or in collaboration with other individuals or groups of researchers.



2 This policy needs to be outlined in a regulatory framework as a derivative of the National System of Science and Technology Law (*UU Siskas iptek*). Given that this regulatory framework primarily regulates processes and not institutions, this regulatory framework can take the form of government regulations.



3 This policy also needs to be implemented within an institutional framework that refers to the mandate of the National System of Science and Technology Law (*UU Siskas iptek*). BRIN as the sole government agency that manages research in Indonesia – especially research outside universities – needs to ensure the independence of researchers and research through collaboration mechanisms and policy frameworks that are not designed to limit research, but to encourage and facilitate collaboration by providing flexibility for researchers to conduct research without complicated licensing processes, accessing funds and data, and processing research results.



4 An accountability mechanism as part of this policy needs to be established as a means to evaluate the extent to which the independence of researchers and research is guaranteed and collaboration can be encouraged.

Jakarta, 23 March 2022

AKATIGA Center for Social Analysis

Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM)

Center for Indonesian Law and Policy Studies (PSHK)

Article 33 Indonesia

The Regional Autonomy Implementation Monitoring Committee (KPPOD)

Center for Excellence in Health Policy and Social Innovation Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia (PUI-PT PPH PUK2IS UAJ)

Cakra Wikara Indonesia (CWI)

Katadata

Sajogyo Institute

Centre for Innovation Policy and Governance (CIPG)

Center For Health Policy and Management (PKMK) Universitas Gadjah Mada

The National Secretary Indonesian Forum for Budget Transparency (Seknas FITRA)

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

The Center for the Study of Islam and Society Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (PPIM UIN)

SurveyMETER

Institute for Research and Empowerment (IRE)

The Paramadina Centre for the Study of Religion and Democracy (PUSAD Paramadina)

The SMERU Research Institute