Accountability Principles for Research Organisations (APRO)

Phase II: Putting the principles into practice

Goal: to improve the accountability of research organisations working in developing countries, by testing practical processes and tools derived from the first phase of APRO, building their credibility, disseminating them amongst research organisations, and thereby facilitating their uptake.

Objectives: APRO II therefore has the following objectives:

1. To develop in collaboration with selected policy- and innovation-research organisations a shared understanding of accountability practices, and thereby to "crash-test" the principles through processes of practical implementation;

2. To provide a reference compendium that reinterprets as accountability mechanisms (in accordance with the principles) existing tools in relevant research fields – such as participatory action research, research ethics, research evaluation, advocacy evaluation, and network and partnership good practices; and

3. To strengthen awareness of the issues raised by accountability of research and to contribute to the debate on the accountability of policy research institutes through the publication and dissemination of a comprehensive research report and parallel seminars and briefings.

Rationale: The One World Trust believes that accountability in research is important for both research organisations and for public policy formulation. Accountable research empowers policy-makers to make better decisions, based on evidence, and offers the opportunity to produce better public policy. For research organisations, the credibility and legitimacy of their research is dependent in part on their accountability.

Background: The first phase of APRO formulated a framework which views accountability through four key principles: *transparency*, *participation*, *evaluation* and *feedback management*. Each of these principles is important: conducting research in accordance with good research ethics and transparently communicating research data is important for policy credibility, and for securing funding. Engaging with stakeholders and encouraging participation in key planning processes assists ownership of the findings. Evaluation processes can usefully balance feedback management and learning with donor reporting. Reflecting on accountability provides opportunities for organisations to engage with beneficiaries.

Project Activities: APRO II will:

- Create an online inventory of accountability tools for research organisations

- Work with five research organisations to develop practical and tested processes for implementing accountability within research organisations

- Open discussions on accountability through seminars and the use of online forums

- Foster a community of practice comprising interested organisations and individuals.