

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

WORKSHOP

“Building capacities of Social Science Research System (SSRS) in Albania for Policy Impact Assessment and Evidence-Informed Policy-Making”

Tirana, 10-11 March 2016

1. Background

PERFORM (Performing and Responsive Social Sciences) and RRPP (Regional Research Promotion Programme – Western Balkans) are two regional projects funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Both programmes aim at enhancing the relevance of social science research to society. PERFORM focuses its interventions on strengthening the social science research community through facilitating the development of systemic linkages between social science research and the policy domain, and fostering an enabling environment for social science research.

RRPP has been working in the region since 2007 towards establishing and strengthening research and institutional capacities in the field of social sciences through research grants, institutional research partnerships, methodological and thematic trainings as well as opportunities for regional and international networking. It has also coordinated the National Policy Dialogues in a respective Western Balkan country. The programme phases out by the end of 2016.

In line with its goals, PERFORM is currently engaged in a dialogue with the Government of Albania. The focal point of this exchange is the importance of feeding scientific evidence into the policy cycle. Within its structured dialogue with state institutions, PERFORM is especially working with the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) of the Prime Minister’s Office to streamline and strengthen available tools and capacities in order to conduct ex-post policy impact assessments for specific policy areas.

Concomitantly, RRPP has continued a dialogue with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY). However, according to the study on the “Use of Scientific Evidence in Designing Social Protection Policies in Albania” from 2015, the relationship between scientific evidence and policy-making had still unveiled significant room for improvement.

The priority of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth is thus to enhance awareness and increase the capacities of the MSWY’s personnel to incorporate scientific evidence into policy making by focusing on concrete policies as pilot projects implemented by MSWY.

Given these concerns and related activities of both programmes, PERFORM and RRPP are organizing a workshop with leading scientists from the University of Zurich, who will present modern procedures and best practices from Switzerland in this regard.

2. Purpose of the Workshop

The purpose of the workshop is threefold:

1. Provide representatives of the SPU, MSWY and of the selected social science researchers with the insights on: i) the latest methodologies for Evidence-Informed Policy-Making (EIPM) and Policy Impact Analysis (PIA); ii) illustrate with examples on how evidence-informed policy-making and policy impact assessments are being implemented in Switzerland;
2. Familiarize the workshop participants with the latest developments on integral elements, methodological tools and approaches to PIA;
3. Engage the participants in a discussion on PIA, so that they can define the needed support for building their capacities to conduct PIA and using the results of the assessment in the policy-making.

4. Workshop participants

The workshop is open to representatives of the Strategic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Office, representatives of Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and selected social science researchers.

5. The workshop will be moderated by two professors from University of Zurich:

- Prof. Dr. Thomas Widmer – Head of Research Policy Analysis & Evaluation, Department of Political Science, University of Zurich
<http://www.ipz.uzh.ch/de/institut/mitarbeitende/staff/widmer.html>
- Dr. Kathrin Frey – Researcher, Department of Political Science, University of Zurich
<http://www.ipz.uzh.ch/de/institut/mitarbeitende/staff/kfrey.html>

6. **Workshop place and dates:** Tirana, on 10-11 March 2016

7. Who can participate?

Given the number of participants and the reserved places for officials from SPU and MSWY, the workshop offers a limited number of places for social science researchers, who express their interest.

The expected applicants should fulfill the following criteria:

- Have at least 5 years of working experience in organizations focused on research;
- Have a clear understanding of the public policy cycle and policy making processes, documented by previous professional experience and publications.

Prior working experience within the institutions of public administration in Albania will be an asset.

Please send an updated CV and a list of relevant publications to abi.dodbiba@cdinstitute.eu and erisa.lame@rpp-westernbalkans.net

Deadline for application: February 29th, 2016, 12:00 hrs

Notification of acceptance: March 4th, 2016

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send an email to the above indicated addresses.