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The Acquisition of Research Knowledge by National-Level Decision Makers in Indonesia

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The Acquisition of Research Knowledge by National-Level Decision Makers in Indonesia

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistics Indonesia)
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah
KSI	Knowledge Sector Initiative
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RENSTRA	Rencana Strategis (Strategic Plan)
TADF	Ministry of Finance's Assistance Team on Fiscal Decentralisation

Executive Summary

The Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI) aims to help improve the quality of policy and related outcomes in Indonesia through the use of knowledge, especially research knowledge. This report provides a baseline of how national-level decision makers acquire research knowledge, against which KSI will measure any progress to which it contributes during the lifetime of the programme. Taking a mixed methods approach, the research comprised 32 interviews with more than 90 government decision makers, primarily from a range of agencies within the executive during a four-week period in early 2015, with draft findings presented for validation in mid-2015. Although we interviewed respondents within the legislature, they were far fewer in number than those within the executive. So although we report on what those on the legislative side of government said in the main body of the report, we have decided not present the findings in this summary for fear of results being seen as comparable to those within the executive.

Given the relatively small sample size, rather than disaggregating responses by specific agency, we did so by broad institution type. **We identified two broad types of institution**:
1. Relatively well-resourced institutions which had the capability to 'deliver' policy directly. These comprised the Ministries of Finance, Trade, Education, Health and Manpower, and Transmigration. We called these **'spending' institutions**.
2. Institutions which usually had to coordinate and/or influence other (often 'spending') agencies to 'get things done'. These included the Ministries of Planning (Bappenas), Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Law and Human Rights, the coordinating ministries (of Economic Affairs and Human Development and Culture) and the Office of the Vice President. We called these '**influencing' institutions**.

Key findings were:

Types of policy work undertaken by decision makers involved:
- **Non-discretionary work** comprising regular development planning and budgeting; and
- **Discretionary work** comprising developing and revising legislation and regulations as well as developing general and technical guidelines to manage projects and programmes (such as Raskin (the Rice for the Poor Programme) or PKH (the Family Hope Programme, a conditional cash transfer programme).

The types of knowledge considered by decision makers within the executive when making and shaping policy were (in order of preference):
- Statistical or administrative data
- Research studies and expert advice
- Citizen perceptions and experiences.

The main reasons for acquiring research and expertise by decision makers within the executive were to (in order of preference):
- Provide context (including understanding policy problems and issues)
- Help develop policy and strategy
- Defend, convince others of, or legitimise a decision.

Scoping the question

Research questions were usually generated in an ad hoc manner and were often driven by directives from senior decision makers. A professional

background, as well as support from experts from research institutes, universities and international organisations helped decision makers shape the exact nature of research questions.

Gathering research and expertise

To procure research, decision makers in spending institutions such as the Ministries of Health, Education, Trade and Finance could bid to do so internally (through their Balitbangs) but were not guaranteed to 'win'. Middle-level decision makers, in particular, would have **to seek approval from various levels**, which dissuaded them from doing so in the first place. **Procurement rules limited the ability of decision makers to hire top-end researchers** from outside the agency to undertake research.

Decision makers, especially from influencing institutions which had fewer means to procure research internally, often sought to secure research **funding from international and donor agencies**. In some cases donors had funded in-house technical support which provided the means to procure research relatively quickly. However, many of these initiatives had been cut in recent years. Nevertheless, donor preferences in relation to research content and procurement processes limited government ownership.

Cumbersome processes for procuring research internally and externally (in addition to pressure to make decisions quickly and with limited funding) meant decision makers were more likely to invite experts (as individuals) to **provide advice both informally and formally through social processes** rather than commission formal research. Exactly who decision makers turned to for expertise depended on the issue as well as their own personal and professional networks.

Decision makers within the executive were most likely **to consult experts in universities** both nationally and at provincial level, followed by international organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies. Other significant sources were internal sources (within the same bureau or directorate as the official), the Balitbang (if a government institution had one), other government institutions (such as *Badan Pusat Statistik* (BPS) (Statistics Indonesia), NGOs, research centres, private firms and consultancies.

Decision makers working for spending institutions

said they were more likely to seek information and expertise internally (either from within their bureau or other bureaus, including the Balitbang) than externally (universities, international organisations, NGOs and consultancies).

Interpreting the research and expertise

Decision makers within the executive were more likely to learn from research and experts through **formal and informal meetings, focus group discussions and seminars**. Reports and summaries were less significant channels, while the Internet, study tours and video conferences were the least preferred channels.

Decision makers usually **reviewed the quality of the research or expertise offered informally** using a variety of methods, such as hiring what they considered to be the 'best' experts if they could afford to, using their experience and personal judgement, monitoring the research process closely by asking researchers to report regularly, seeking validation from personal and professional networks and organising reviews within their own bureau or sub-bureau. Research produced by a Balitbang however, was subject to formal quality control processes.

Challenges acquiring and using research and expertise

Several factors led to decision makers facing difficulties in procuring (and using) research and expertise. They included: the poor quality and lack of policy relevance of research, limited availability of expertise on some issues, lack of high quality raw data, and limited political and economic space for decision makers to put into practice some of the advice offered.

Given KSI's intention to conduct more in-depth baseline work in specific policy areas and with specific institutions, we suggest that further work be done on the diagnostic component of an action-oriented capacity building project, with specific decision makers building trust with potential interviewees. This should be done as part of KSI's existing plan. We also suggest that any further work support interventions being pursued by KSI and explore research-related practices of policy makers in relation to the different types of policy and functions decision makers undertake.

Introduction 1

1. 1 Background

The Knowledge Sector Initiative (KSI) aims to promote improvement in the quality of policy and related outcomes in Indonesia through the use of knowledge. Although organisations working to facilitate and deliver improvements in policy outcomes include a wide variety of actors,[1] KSI is pursuing a number of interventions that will help facilitate improved performance of government agencies, which are seen as primary users of research knowledge, knowledge institutions, such as research centres and think tanks which produce research knowledge, and the relationships between them.

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan was developed for KSI to generate useful information for two primary users: organisations receiving support from KSI, and the KSI implementation team. One of the key evaluation questions was, "What have been the longer-term results/impacts?" For progress to be assessed (throughout and after the initial five-year programme), a baseline showing initial conditions before interventions were deployed needed to be captured. KSI requested a baseline study of how national-level decision makers acquired research knowledge.

1.2 Objectives and Key Questions

The objectives of this study was to:

- Assess how research knowledge is acquired by government decision makers at the national level;
- Make suggestions as to what approach KSI could take in undertaking more in-depth baseline studies in specific policy areas.

In collaboration with the KSI implementation team, we prepared the following research questions:

1. What sorts of policy work do decision makers undertake?
2. What types of knowledge do decision makers draw on when making policy?
3. For what purpose do decision makers require different forms of knowledge?
4. How do decision makers articulate their need for research knowledge?
5. From where do decision makers get their research knowledge?
6. In what form do decision makers access research knowledge?
7. How is the confidence/quality of research knowledge assessed/rated?
8. What challenges are there to accessing and using research knowledge?

1. 3 Methodology

To allow for varied and rich responses, we decided to take a largely qualitative approach to the study. Using the research questions outlined earlier, we collaborated with the KSI implementation team to design an interview guide. We piloted the guide in December 2014 and made revisions as a result. The guide can be found in Annex 1. To be most useful, and given various resource constraints, we took a purposive approach to selecting decision makers to interview. We applied the following criteria to the policy areas that KSI-supported knowledge institutions aimed to influence: whether they were a presidential priority; and the presence of an existing relationship between the research team and potential decision makers.

We requested interviews with 71 decision makers from both the executive and legislative arms of government. As a result, in March 2015, we secured 32 interviews with 95 people comprising middle- and senior-level government decision makers. The interviews can be broken

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1 Such as government agencies, businesses, parliamentarians (and their staff), political parties, NGOs, media houses, universities, bi- and multi-lateral organisations, trade unions and other actors.

down into the following categories:
- 30 interviews with active decision makers and two interviews with retired decision makers
- 27 interviews with decision makers from the executive side of government and five with those from the legislative side
- 10 interviews with decision makers working on economic policies, 16 working on social policies, five working on politics and governance and one working on health policy
- Of the 32 interviews, one was with a former minister, three were with elected legislators, 13 were with decision makers ranked at echelon one, 12 were with decision makers ranked at echelon two and one was with a decision maker at echelon three. Two interviews were with decision makers who did not appear to have formal echelon rankings.

Where we received permission from the interviewee to do so, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Where respondents preferred to speak in Bahasa Indonesia, we transcribed the Bahasa and then translated to English. We used software to analyse the qualitative data and turned ranking data into charts. In analysing the responses, there were several relationships we could have explored, but based on the strength of hypotheses, the limited time we had available and the small sample size, we disaggregated key (not all) responses in the following three ways:
- Given the different functions of the executive and legislative side of government, we disaggregated responses by whether they were provided by people who worked in the executive or the legislature. However, there were far fewer interviewees from the legislative side than the executive side of government. Therefore, although we report on what interviewees on the legislative side said, we have decided not to display results graphically, for fear of results being seen as comparable to those from the executive side.
- Within the executive, different ministries and agencies were said to have different 'cultures' around how they acquired research knowledge (Datta et al. 2011). However, given the small sample size, rather than disaggregating responses by specific agency, we did so by broad institution type. We identified two broad types of institution. First, relatively well-resourced institutions which had the capability to 'deliver' policy/services directly (but through and with various other often local-level bodies), comprising the Ministries of Finance, Trade, Education, Health and Manpower, and Transmigration. For the purposes of this report, we call these 'spending' institutions. Second, we identified institutions which usually had to work with/through 'spending' (and other) institutions to 'get things done'. These included the Ministries of Planning (Bappenas), Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Law and Human Rights, the coordinating ministries (of Economic Affairs and Human Development and Culture) and the Office of the Vice President. We call these 'influencing' institutions.
- Different policy areas (or issues) were said to favour different forms of knowledge (see Jones et al. 2012). In some areas, we disaggregated responses depending on whether they were seen as being an economic or social issue. We did not include responses from politics and governance, as there were too few and we categorised responses from the one health interview as social policy. We define economic issues as formal measures to improve economic productivity in its broadest sense. We define social issues as those that directly affect human welfare.

We only report disaggregated responses if the differences are visibly large when displayed graphically.

To organise the information, we adapted a framework developed by Shaxson et al (2009). Once a report was drafted, KSI organised a workshop to validate the findings to which the study team, KSI staff and interviewees from the study were invited. Taking place in July 2015 and attended by 34 people, the study team presented the key findings and asked participants for feedback, which was incorporated into a revised version of the report.

1.4 Organisation of the Report

This report is organised in the following way:
- Section two outlines the sorts of work decision makers said they did.
- Section three assesses the different types of knowledge that decision makers draw on and why.
- Section four focuses on how decision makers acquire research and expertise. It has three parts: the first part describes how decision makers scope the question for which they need knowledge; the second describes how research knowledge is procured and from whom; and the third explores how research and expertise is interpreted, including what channels are used to learn from research and expertise and what processes, if any, are used to review quality.
- Section five suggests factors that constrain decision makers' acquisition of research knowledge and expertise. These factors are split into two parts. The first explores factors to do with the nature of the knowledge, how it is produced and the way in which it is presented, while the second looks at factors that are more to do with the way in which government institutions operate.

- Section six draws on the main findings of the study to make some observations about how decision makers acquire research and expertise and makes suggestions about further baseline work.

2 The Work of Decision Makers

This section describes the sorts of work conducted by decision makers. The purpose here is to describe the broad purposes for which knowledge is sought, thus putting the acquisition of knowledge into context.

The types of work that policy makers were involved in could be broadly grouped under two headings: non-discretionary (or regular processes) and discretionary (or ad hoc).

In relation to non-discretionary work, many decision makers across both spending and influencing institutions were involved (at various points during the year) in multi-year and annual development planning and budgeting. This included drafting components of the five-year strategic plan (or Renstra) for line ministries and agencies, annual workplans or action plans featuring baselines, targets and performance indicators, 'who does what' and corresponding annual budgets (for different directorates within ministries).

One director general from the Ministry of Education and Culture stated that translating the five-year strategic plan into annual plans and targets for the various programmes within his directorate general was the most important part of his job.

In relation to non-discretionary work, decision makers were responsible for developing or amending legislation, which happened relatively rarely, and generating and amending regulations (instruments to execute legislation by providing specific implementation guidelines), which happened more frequently.

Regulations often took the form of government regulations (*peraturan pemerintah*) or presidential regulations (*peraturan presiden or perpres*), as well as presidential instructions, presidential decrees, ministerial decrees and circulation letters.

Some regulations were developed proactively and planned in advance, while others were reactive, responding to public opinion or a crisis of some sort.

Decision makers were more likely to be busy developing regulations in spending institutions. In some cases, decision makers managed programmes, requiring the development or revision of general guidelines (*pedoman umum*) and technical guidelines (*petunjuk teknis or juknis*), which provided guidance on how programmes would be implemented.

Some decision makers suggested they also worked on standard operating procedures. For example, an official from the Ministry of Manpower suggested standard operating procedures were used to regulate the protection of domestic workers.

Decision makers in influencing institutions suggested they played more of a facilitative role, monitoring key programmes (often those run by spending institutions), presenting information to 'higher ups' and bringing together decision makers from different institutions to find solutions to persistent policy problems that were a key priority for the president and/or minister(s). This was the case in relation to the coordinating ministries and the office of the vice president. Decision makers from influencing institutions might find themselves advising those from spending counterparts through guidelines and manuals, or advocating for them to adopt changes to the way they worked. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment often did this in relation to mainstreaming gender.

Within all institutions people either worked for 'delivery' units (most people we spoke to), mandated to produce certain outputs, while

provide support to the minister or other delivery units, which included the office of the secretary general and the Balitbang.

Some in delivery units, particularly those working on economic issues within big spending institutions also undertook preparatory work for international and regional negotiations in relation to trade and finance. Those in support units, especially within big spending institutions, would often play a coordinating or 'synchronising' role to avoid duplication of work by different delivery units (in the case of the office of the secretary general) as well as provide answers to questions and requests from the 'higher ups' (as in the case of the Balitbang)

During interviews, the function of monitoring, reporting and evaluation was only rarely mentioned. Although this function was institutionalised at both national and local levels, there did not seem to be a formal system for most of the agencies' work, apart from where projects and programmes were donor-funded. This might be because in many cases this function was delegated to local or sub-national authorities.

Decision makers we interviewed did not allude to the existence of any sort of guidance on how knowledge, and in particular research knowledge, could support their policy work.

3 Types of Knowledge Considered by Decision Makers

3.1 What Counts as Knowledge?

Decision makers within the executive said they considered various forms of knowledge, including academic drafts, statistical data, policy studies, assessments, spot checks, information from 'the people' and 'communities', good practice studies, meta-analyses or syntheses, impact evaluations and experiences from other countries. Those on the legislative side of government said they also considered public opinion, media reports, reports of government activity, stories or anecdotes and meetings with constituents, firms and other interest groups.

To help represent these diverse types of knowledge, we grouped them into the following categories:

- Administrative and statistical data: such as the number of domestic workers, local government revenues and the price of commodities, such as rice. In the charts that follow we call this 'Data'.
- Research studies and expert advice: we define research as information gathered from 'materials and sources' (which might include other forms of knowledge such as statistical data and citizen experiences) in a systematic way mainly by scientists, academics, consultants, experts or professionals in order to establish 'facts' and draw conclusions, usually couched in technical terms (Jones et al. 2012). However, we found that interviewees often conflated research with expert advice. A number of interviewees explained that they defined research as in-depth conversation among experts to discuss trends in data. In most cases we could not separate out research and expert advice, so we combined them. In the charts we call this 'Research'.
- Citizen experiences and perceptions: knowledge held by different stakeholders, such as citizens, teachers, farmers and entrepreneurs among others, both individually and collectively, drawing on their daily lives (Jones et al. 2012). In the charts we call this 'Participatory'.
- Policy implementation experiences and learning (or programme/project implementation monitoring and evaluation): experience of implementing policy (directly through the management and delivery of projects, programmes and services or indirectly through the general functioning of an institution), or gained more generally through hands-on action (Jones et al. 2012). In the charts we call this 'Practice'.
- Personal knowledge: this includes one's own experiences, knowledge, judgement, values and beliefs. In the charts we call this 'Personal'.
- Media reports: anything that covers and reports news, including newspapers, television and radio as well as social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp. In the charts we call this 'Media'.

3.2 Types of Knowledge upon which Decision Makers are Most Likely to Draw

Here we present what types of knowledge decision makers said they preferred to draw on in their policy work. Figure 1 presents preferences across the executive branch of government, while Figure 2 presents preferences disaggregated by institution type.

Among those working within the executive, decision makers drew primarily on data, followed by research and expert advice, citizen experience and perceptions and policy implementation experiences/learning. A small proportion of decision makers suggested they valued personal knowledge. No decision makers mentioned media reports. Among those decision makers working on the legislative side of government, media reports were seen as the most valued form of knowledge, followed by citizen experience and perception, policy implementation experiences and statistical data. Once again, a very small proportion of decision makers valued personal knowledge.
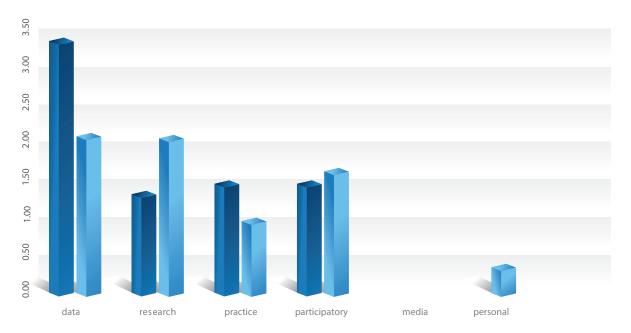
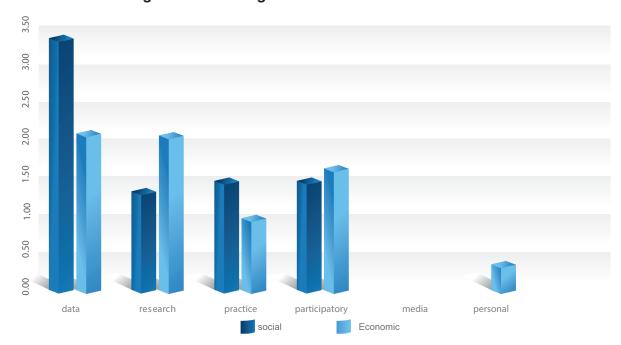**Figure 1: Knowledge Preferences Across the Executive**

Figure 2: Knowledge Preferences Within the Executive

3.3 Administrative and Statistical Data

Those who worked for spending institutions drew on data rather more than those who worked for influencing institutions. This may have been due to the larger and more numerous programmes they were responsible for managing, which required targets, projects and improvement rates (see reasons for acquiring data below).

Respondents suggested they acquired administrative and statistical data for a number of purposes including to:

1. Explore current development trends, help tell a story of the status quo and identify issues that needed to be addressed.
2. Raise the quality of policy debate and reduce the potential for conflict between government institutions (see Box 1 below).
3. Use as a basis for planning and formulating policies: design targets, make projections and assign improvement rates (for example, the rate at which school enrolment needed to improve year on year to meet medium-term targets).
4. Make and defend decisions and financial allocations: without basic data, decision makers would be basing policy on their 'instincts', while the auditor general was more likely to question allocations. Data helped to bolster the argument and secure funding (from Bappenas, for example) for specific programmes.
5. Demonstrate the impact that policies were having on outcomes as well as help adjust policies to the needs of 'beneficiaries' such as local governments.

Some decision makers emphasised how difficult it was to access good quality data, as institutions tended to hold on to data they produced (given it was produced at a cost).[1] However, others suggested that although there was a significant amount of data (of varying quality) little work was done to make sense of it all. Another official suggested that while data provided retrospective trends and highlighted problems it did not indicate what was needed to solve the identified problems. To address both of these challenges, decision makers suggested that research studies and expert advice was required.

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2 Several respondents spent a significant amount of time describing some of the challenges they faced in acquiring data. However, as the focus of this study is research (and expertise), we will not report on these findings here.

Box 1 - The Use of Knowledge in Raising the Quality of Debate

In 2006, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade disagreed on whether there would be enough rice after the harvest and whether to import rice into the country. The Ministry of Trade insisted that there was a need to import rice, as the price of rice was increasing. The Ministry of Agriculture however said the harvest would yield enough rice, that traders were hoarding rice stocks and there would be no need to import rice. Other actors, such as the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (House of Representatives), the coordinating minister, as well as other members of the cabinet became involved in the debate. Rice was eventually imported, but only once the price of rice had increased by 30 per cent. With support from World Bank experts who analysed price data, the Ministry of Trade was able to show that the price of rice going up did not help farmers, as they were net consumers of rice and that the increase in price led to a 1 percent increase in the poverty rate. Since then, these sorts of issues were discussed in the coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs, and with the availability of higher quality data (on things like commodity prices), there were fewer 'fights' between the Ministries of Trade and Agriculture.

3.4 Research Studies and Expert Advice

Decision makers preferred general 'expert advice' much more than they did specific research studies communicated through reports and summaries. Several decision makers referred to research as advice offered to the minister in the form of a second opinion or in-depth focus group discussions (FGDs) with technical experts to discuss trends in data and draw implications for their policy work. However, this is not to say that an individual's expertise might not be based on a body of knowledge developed through the implementation of numerous research studies over a period of time.

After administrative and statistical data, decision makers within the executive were more likely to demand research studies and expert advice, while legislators seemed less likely to obtain and use this. Within the executive, decision makers in influencing institutions seemed to demand research studies and expert advice slightly more than those in spending institutions.

3.4.1 Benefits of Acquiring Research and Expertise

Respondents suggested several benefits of acquiring research studies and expert advice. Respondent preferences within the executive, disaggregated by type of issue and type of institution, can be seen in Figures 3, 4 and 5 respectively.
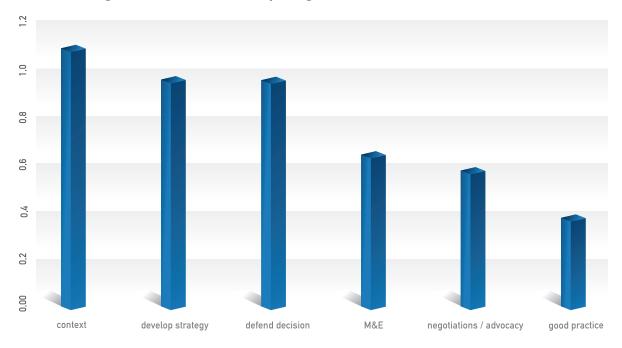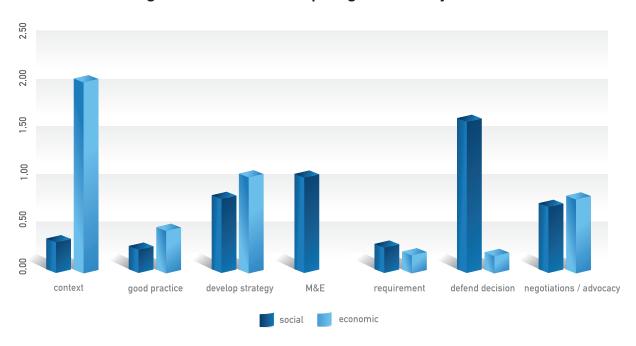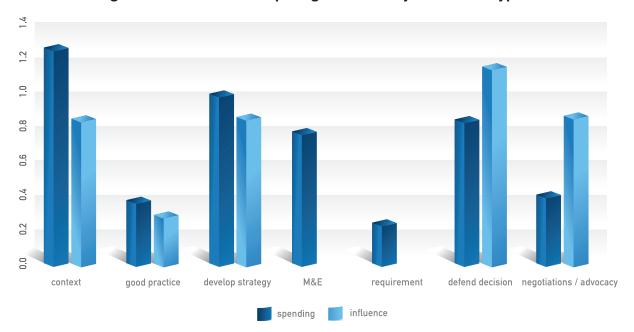
Figure 3: Reasons for Acquiring Research Across the Executive

Figure 4: Reasons for Acquiring Research by Issue

Figure 5: Reasons for Acquiring Research by Institution Type

Legend: spending, influence

Key reasons for accessing and using research studies and expert advice among executive decision makers seemed to be to provide context, develop strategy and defend or legitimise a decision. Other reasons included monitoring and evaluating policy implementation, strengthening engagement with others, identifying good practice and meeting bureaucratic requirements.

Among those we spoke to on the legislative side of government, by far the most important reason for acquiring research studies and expert advice was as a bureaucratic requirement. Other significant reasons were to provide context and to defend or legitimise a decision.

Within the executive, three differences are worth noting. The first is that decision makers dealing with economic issues were much more likely to demand research studies and expert advice to provide contextual information (such as identifying/highlighting problems). This might be due to: a perceived need to address higher levels of technical complexity in areas which appear more abstract to non-specialists, such as those relating to finance and economics; or pressure to improve economic development, which in turn has increased the robustness and rigour of economic policy.

The second difference worth noting is that those working on social issues were more likely to acquire research studies and expert advice to defend a decision or policy. Speculating, this might be because social programmes often faced

the threat of having their funding cut, as decision makers held a different set of values or were under pressure to legitimise prior decisions with credible knowledge.

Third, decision makers working for influencing institutions were more likely to acquire research studies and expertise to inform their engagement work (often with spending institutions), possibly in order to bolster their position (especially when ministers failed to influence others through their strength of personality or their networks). We describe the different reasons for using research studies and expert advice in more detail below.

Provide Context

Decision makers suggested research could provide contextual information, such as the nature of underlying problems. One former decision maker asked for research which would identify problems being faced by traditional marketers, most of whom were women, while another asked experts to come and consider why maternal mortality was persistently high in specific districts. The Ministry of Health was puzzled by continued high levels of maternal and infant mortality and malnutrition despite the *Bantuan Operasional Kesehatan* (health operational assistance) programme for local Puskesmas (health centres). This led it to undertake small-scale assessments and consult experts.

Others wanted research to identify trends, for example how neighbouring countries

were performing (in relation to exports and imports) or provide theoretical perspectives. Alternatively, where legislation/regulation (or their amendments) had been planned, research studies provided the rationale for such changes and suggested how they related to the current legislative and regulatory framework.

Develop Strategy/Policy

Decision makers suggested research studies and expert advice could help identify a variety of strategies, policy options, tools and/or instruments to meet specific outcome targets often documented in strategic plans (such as the Renstra). Research studies and expert advice helped decision makers from the Ministry of Trade to identify ways of promoting trade in specific commodities to compete with neighbouring countries. Decision makers mentioned this form of knowledge could be used to: identify unconventional approaches to addressing policy issues or meet targets; identify risks and pitfalls in advance of implementing a programme; and inform required changes in policy as a result of changes in the context, new problems, and/or targets.

Defend Decisions and Provide Objectivity

Research studies and expert advice were often acquired to help legitimise policies and decisions. For example, decision makers said research was acquired to: convince the public of the necessity of changes that were made or being proposed; subdue unrest surrounding an issue; help elected decision makers promote positive perceptions of a decision, project or programme in the media; give decision makers confidence in taking a decision; and provide backing to pre-existing approaches. Other decision makers talked about using research to defend decisions within government: convincing Bappenas, the Ministry of Finance and the DPR to increase or maintain allocations for certain projects and programmes. One decision maker from the Ministry of Education said: "To convince Bappenas, we need to have academic-based data with several references and formulation to determine the specific allocation within the budget." Finally, decision makers suggested research could provide a degree of objectivity so others could not accuse them of favouring one group or another, as the following quote illustrates:

"… And then sometimes, that's where you really have to listen to them, and they give you all kinds of data, that some don't make sense. Then you have to figure it out, right? And that's actually where research helps. They have to give you an objective answer […] otherwise people make enemies, 'Oh you're just favouring him, you're favouring her'. It helps you to figure out what's the right policy. Otherwise, they will accuse you anyway, 'You're favouring him, you're favouring her. Why you doing this, why you doing that?' Oh I got a lot of that." (Key informant, February 2015).

Monitor, Report and Evaluate

Some decision makers said they would demand research studies or call on experts to help review/evaluate policy or programmes, especially large ones. One decision maker from the Ministry of Education asked the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Education Ministry's Balitbang to undertake research on the Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (school operational budget), a programme in which the ministry had made a significant investment.

Strengthen Negotiation Capacity and Advocacy

Some decision makers suggested they demanded research studies and expert advice to inform engagement with other institutions. Those from the Ministry of Trade mentioned the importance of research studies and expert advice in informing their negotiating position during regional and international trade talks. Those from Bappenas and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment mentioned that research helped inform the advice they provided to other institutions, especially spending ministries, thereby strengthening their arguments. For example, decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment sought research from the Women's Studies Centre to help them engage more effectively with the Ministry of Forestry on mainstreaming gender.

Identify Good Practice

Several decision makers acquired research studies and expert advice to provide them with examples of good practice: from overseas as well as from Indonesia. A Ministry of Finance official referred to research from Australia, the United States and Switzerland on how municipal bonds work. Knowledge of good practices helped decision makers develop new approaches to tackling persistent problems and devise strategies and policies. n official in the Ministry of Education, in drawing up a new policy to improve school management, drew on good practices achieved in a joint UNICEF/UNESCO pilot project,

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Box 2 - Using Research to Influence Education Policy

The new administration made its mark in the education sector immediately by proposing to increase the number of compulsory years of education from nine to 12. The government drew on: 1) work published by UNESCO and the World Bank, which showed that countries were unlikely to reduce poverty sustainably unless children were able to complete 12 years of education; and 2) data which showed one third of Indonesia's population was below the age of 14, which in turn provided opportunities to utilise the demographic dividend. However, the proposal was rejected by the DPR as the existing law legislated for only nine years of compulsory education. The Government opted to push for the full 12 years, but has in the meantime commissioned research on the merits and drawbacks of doing so, to help with advancing the legislative process.

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which was subsequently documented in the form of an action-research paper. Several decision makers pointed to the importance of adapting good practices, especially from those overseas, to ensure interventions were context-specific.

Meeting Bureaucratic Requirements

Several decision makers suggested they commissioned research studies, particularly 'academic drafts' as a requirement to draft and pass legislation (and now, given new legislation, a regulation). The academic draft aimed to provide context and rationale for legislation. Previous research suggests that in many cases, these academic drafts tend to be of poor quality and are drafted to satisfy bureaucratic requirements (Datta et al. 2011).

3.5 Citizen Experiences and Perceptions

Decision makers within the executive, on average, ranked citizen perceptions and experiences as the third most preferred form of knowledge, after data and research studies/ expert advice, while those on the legislative side of government ranked this form of knowledge as their second most preferred, after media reports.

Decision makers referred to citizen experiences and perceptions as:

1. The opinion of the 'person on the street': knowledge from local communities (brokered in the form of a workshop with local leaders) (Ministry of Finance in Riau and Surabaya).
2. Reports compiled by district offices on community-level perspectives (such as those stated by Education decision makers).
3. Issues and facts from the community (Women's Empowerment).
4. The perspective of people from the community, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and from industry (Women's Empowerment).
5. In passing laws, decision makers from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights considered comments and especially complaints made by

the public. They also held hearings to which religious leaders, leaders of ethnic groups and academics were invited.

Legislators stated the main type of knowledge they collected was qualitative data from their constituents. Some Members of Parliament (MPs) were said to receive 100 to 200 letters every month from their constituents. Knowledge included information sent to the mobile phones of elected representatives in the form of short messages or SMS.

Decision makers provided fewer reasons for using stakeholder perspectives (than for using data or research) but included:

- Understanding problems and issues faced by specific groups of people. A respondent from the office of the vice president sent his team to meet with rice farmers to gather perceptions of the problems they were facing (especially as rice production had been re-prioritised by the new administration), while another official from the Ministry of Manpower stated he had talked directly with Indonesian workers, with representatives of companies and union members to help him understand key policy issues.
- Nudging communities to implement policy, especially in the context of limited state resources. Education-related respondents suggested participation of local stakeholders was vital in implementing education policy. For example, central-level decision makers consulted headmasters and teachers, among others. Catholic colleges, Christians, those from Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama were also invited to have a role (especially in the delivery of the national education curriculum).
- Decision makers suggested public opinion was an influential factor in promoting policy change, as well as convincing institutions such as Bappenas to include projects and programmes in national development plans

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Box 3 - Combining Different Sorts of Knowledge to Roll Out Policy

To begin the process of improving the effectiveness of traditional markets, the Ministry of Trade commissioned a survey company to document the location of Indonesia's traditional markets using words and pictures. Information collected included how many traders there were (more than 13,000) and what they sold, among other things. Previous attempts to improve traditional markets had often failed. The Minister led the development of a programme called Percontohan, or model markets. Starting with a pilot, a team of architects, a sociologist and non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives (to act as facilitators) were sent to work with local marketers to explore how markets could be re-designed and improved. At that point they realised that while 90 per cent of traders were women, 50 per cent of the sanitary facilities in markets were tailored for men. Drawing on how supermarkets are often laid out, a small number of traditional markets were re-designed. To convince Bappenas and the Ministry of Finance to provide funding for a scaled-up initiative, the Ministry of Trade put together a knowledge package including video footage of markets and female traders before and after the transformation, as well an analysis of the number and location of traditional markets across the country. The former Minister of Trade said that "the visuals, the testimonies and the stories" helped to gain public support, with the help of newspapers (often read by cabinet members), which in turn helped to secure budget.

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3.6 Policy and Programme Implementation Experiences and Learning

Within the executive, those in spending ministries, on average, seemed to rank policy implementation experiences/learning slightly higher than those in influencing ministries. Again, this might be because the spending institutions were more likely to be accountable for the delivery of projects and programmes than influencing institutions.

Examples of policy implementation experiences/learning included:

1. Consultations with local governments on problems faced in implementing laws and regulations (Ministry of Finance).
2. Consultations with civil society (mentioned by several decision makers).
3. A review of ministry performance through a self-assessment questionnaire (an example provided by decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment).
4. Quick surveys and spot checks or rapid assessments (see Box 4 below).
5. For significant programmes and often using funding from donors, decision makers conducted evaluations. For example, impact evaluations were carried out for social protection programmes such as PKH (the Family Hope Programme, a conditional cash transfer programme) and PNPM (Indonesia's nationwide community driven development programme) by J-PAL (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab – a research institute that advocates the use of randomised controlled trials to answer critical policy questions).
6. Legislators, on the other hand, were keen to see evaluations from the Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan (the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia) and other reports on government activity to assist with their oversight function.

Decision makers suggested that experiences and learning from policy implementation were gathered to monitor the implementation of policies and programmes and evaluate what they had achieved. Generally, monitoring and evaluation was always required in the implementation of programmes but the rigour and extent of evaluations varied across institutions.

> **Box 4 - Undertaking Spot Checks in Social Protection Policy**
>
> Spot checks were done when decision makers required 'inputs' or needed to revise policy quickly. They were short assessments, based on a questionnaire developed by staff collecting qualitative and quantitative data to assess the performance of particular programmes. One official suggested they did spot checks to explore problems that had become apparent through media reports, had suddenly become an issue for ministers or senior politicians, or during times of crisis. Examples of spot checks included those done when fuel subsidies were cut in 2013 and social protection instruments were rolled out to compensate the poor. This included scaling up the Raskin Rice for the Poor programme. Bappenas did spot checks to check if three months additional rice subsidy was enough for the poor. Other spot checks were carried out to validate targeting mechanisms. When the Government issued social protection cards, there were 'noises' from the media suggesting they had mis-targeted, so Bappenas again undertook a spot check, sending researchers to two places to measure what percentage of benefits were being correctly targeted and going to the right people.

3.7 Personal Knowledge

Some decision makers suggested they often drew on their own experiences, knowledge and judgement to help formulate policy proposals. For example, given specific contextual circumstances, decision makers often instinctively knew (in some instances based on decades of experience as a civil servant) what programmes were needed to help mainstream gender in economic activity or boost examination results among students. Another mentioned 'logic' as the reason why a particular course of action was taken, while some MPs had expertise in specific areas such as law or health, which helped them draft legislation or make certain decisions.

3.8 Media Reports

The decision makers we spoke to on the legislative side of government said legislators preferred, on average, to draw on media reports. The media was arguably a more significant channel for information than a type of information. Nevertheless, we feature it both in this sub-section and in a following section where we discuss what channels decision makers use to access research or expertise. Legislators said they regularly read magazines and newspapers, such as the Jakarta Post, Jakarta Globe, Tempo and Kompass. Reasons for their popularity may have been because they were easily accessible, had a relatively large audience, and were easy and quick to read.

Given KSI's interest in research studies (and expert advice), we now discuss the processes through which decision makers acquire this form of knowledge.

4 Acquiring Research Studies and Expert Advice

Having described the different forms of knowledge that decision makers demanded, we now focus on research studies and expert advice, and the processes through which they were acquired.[1] We first describe how the question that needs answering (with research or expert advice) is shaped. We then explore how the research information is gathered and from whom. Finally we examine what is done to 'make sense' of the research study/expert advice including what is done to review its quality.

4.1 Scoping the Question

Responses to how questions were scoped were more limited than those to other interview questions. Emphasising the importance of scoping the question, one official said, "I think the most important thing is that the policy maker must know what they want, otherwise the research doesn't match."

Nevertheless, there did not seem to be formal processes for scoping research questions before expertise was brought in or research studies procured. In some cases questions emanated from the top of government or the top of a government institution or bureau within it, be it the president, the minister or the director general. In another case, a number of institutions, including the Central Bank, Ministry of Finance and Office of the Vice President set up a working group to control inflation. Among other things, it discussed its research needs if and when they arose.

As mentioned earlier, where legislation or regulations were mandated to be revised on a periodic basis, decision makers often asked experts to generate ideas for potential changes in advance.

In one case some years ago, a spending institution–the Ministry of Trade¬–developed a white paper which set out its priority issues. This in turn helped shape its medium- and long-term research needs.[2] The development of white (and green) papers was rare in Indonesia and it is unclear whether ministry-level strategic plans (Renstra KL) and annual government work plans contained similar information.

In some cases, especially where decision makers had a research or academic background, they seemed clear on their research question. One former senior decision maker suggested her research background helped her take a more systematic approach to developing policy proposals, asking questions such as, What do we know about the issue? What has happened in the past in this country? What has happened elsewhere? Who are the stakeholders? What explains their support or resistance to change? If decision makers were not sure about the topic and the precise nature of the question, experts, both domestic and donor-funded, were often brought in to help. Senior decision makers in

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3 When we asked interviewees how they acquired research studies or expert advice, we were not completely sure whether they included in this category work to understand policy and programme implementation and learning (including evaluations and reviews).

4 *Peraturan Menteri Negara Pemberdayaan Aparatur Negara No. PER/04/M.PAN/2007* on *Pedoman Umum Formulasi, Implementasi, Evaluasi Kinerja, dan Revisi Kebijakan Publik* mentioned only six categories of policy-making products: policy information, policy description, policy statement, policy memo, policy papers (it splits into two: *kertas kebijakan* and *makalah kebijakan*). Therefore green papers and white papers are not a government mandated policy product and are produced at the discretion of the minister.

the Ministry of Trade would bring in experts such as those from the World Bank to present key issues, such as rice prices. As one interviewee said, "If I don't know anything about anything, then I will start by listening, and that's where you could ask the donor, which we did a lot. I don't know anything about commodities, bring me your best commodity expert." Others asked university academics to help them shape the question, both on a formal (paid) and informal (unpaid) basis.

4.2 Gathering Research and Expertise
4.2.1 Procurement Processes

If a delivery unit in one of the spending institutions (and some of the influencing institutions) wanted to procure research through its Balitbang, there are processes it must follow. Generally, each delivery unit (or technical directorate) was asked, through its director general about one year in advance, for the research questions they wanted answered. The Balitbang gathered requests from all technical directorates and decided what research they would be able to do. In some cases, they planned for the medium-term needs as well as quick turnaround ad hoc research requested by the minister or directors general. Box 5 below describes how the research agenda for the Balitbang was developed.

We were told that middle-level decision makers could request research. Formally, they have to go through their line manager and through the hierarchy to seek approval. One official suggested they could make a request directly to colleagues in the Balitbang, although they would keep their manager 'in the loop' (copied into emails and memos).

Box 5 - Selecting Research to Pursue in the Economic Ministries

In the Balitbang for the Ministry of Trade, research is clustered into two groups: domestic and international trade. A 'work research forum' is held for representatives from all internal research units and representatives of technical directorates to discuss priorities and develop the unit's work plan for the following year. Criteria such as the urgency of the topic, the potential impact of the topic and the feasibility of undertaking the research are used to draw up the final list of research projects. One respondent suggested the minister needed to give instructions to the Balitbang to approve its research agenda.

Once the agenda is set, research is assigned to Balitbang researchers, while terms of reference are drawn up. These include the focus of the research, the sample and methodology, as well as an overall budget, which is then discussed with and approved by the Ministry of Finance, and finally Parliament (in the form of annual ministry work plans) before being formalised.

Similar processes were used to collect and prioritise research questions in the Ministry of Finance's Assistance Team on Fiscal Decentralisation (TADF), which we discuss in more detail in the next sub-section. The TADF, after gathering requests from all relevant directorates prioritises and allocates studies to different members of the team. Once studies are allocated, researchers develop their methodologies, which they often share with their 'client'. In 2014, for example, PDRD (a technical directorate within the Ministry of Finance) requested four studies related to the revision of a law, Undang-Undang No. 28 Year 2009 on local tax and retribution.

Until recently, researchers secured funding from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) directly for each research study. In turn, the technical directorate would provide researchers with data (such as annual local government tax revenues). However, another respondent we spoke to had a research proposal to TADF refused, without any reason being given.

If decision makers sought to procure research externally, further rules needed to be followed. These would vary depending on the cost of the research. One decision maker suggested that for small amounts researchers/experts could be directly appointed. An official from the Ministry of Health suggested that for research costing less than IDR 50 million, protocol mandated them to receive proposals from three consultants, and appoint one. For more than IDR 50 million, the ministry had to allow for an open bidding process.[1] However, the latest procurement regulation has increased this threshold to IDR 200 million.

Some decision makers said they had very limited funding at their disposal to formally commission research, given that the Balitbang would traditionally meet a ministry's research needs. There were also restrictions as to how much one could pay domestic research institutes, thereby limiting the quality of researcher that a ministry could hire. One example is Ministry of Finance regulation (*Peraturan Menteri Keuangan* No. 57 Year 2015).

This might be less of an issue if the costs could be borne by external sources. For example, decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment undertook research in partnership with the Women's Studies Centre (WCS) which was able to cover a large proportion of the costs. In some cases, donors have funded (sometimes embedded) technical support, which has been used by senior decision makers to provide on-demand quick turnaround expertise. This was the case in the Ministry of Trade, with support from the Harvard Institute for International Development and the World Bank. For example, one particularly senior former official said: "You need a certain amount of flexibility of quick requests, quick response requests and they were quite a lot. It was like, 'I need this now, quick quick quick'. My house is […] very close to the World Bank office so we used to have a lot of breakfast meetings. 'I need this now, I'm going to have to present it to the cabinet in two days time, now, now, now, now just quickly, quickly get things together'."

Donors often come with their own preferences as to the kinds of research they want to fund, as well as their own procurement processes. One decision maker stated that donor representatives usually drafted concept notes and asked her to refine them. They had preferences as to the most appropriate researcher/consultant/research institute to undertake the research, however, another decision maker said she had the strength of character to ensure donors supported the research work she wanted, rather than vice versa.

On occasion, a ministry might commission research jointly with an international donor agency, through international tenders, which might be won by foreign and/or domestic research centres. At the time of writing, a large research project on advanced vocational training had been sent out for tender through the Ministry of Education.

Time pressures, together with regulatory and funding barriers (which we discuss below), meant decision makers were more likely to invite experts to FGDs and meetings rather than commission formal research.

Exactly whom decision makers turned to for expert advice depended on the issue, as well as their own personal and professional networks. Although qualifications, knowledge and experience were important, for most decision makers trust (developed through at least occasional social interaction) played a major role as to whether specific individuals were invited to make a contribution to policy development processes. Decision makers often sought expertise from those within their own alumni networks. One decision maker who had graduated from the Ministry of Finance's own college and then a Japanese university consulted friends from those networks, some of whom worked for other government institutions, such as Bappenas, the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Another decision maker said than if he needed to organise a discussion about insurance issues, for example, about which he had little knowledge, he would call a friend at the World Bank who would share contact details of relevant experts.

4.2.2 'Go-to' Actors

In this section, we discuss who decision makers approach for expertise or to procure research. Figures 6, 7 and 8 provide graphic representation of this across the executive, within the executive and across different issues, respectively. We discuss what these figures suggest below.

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5 This is outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 54 Year 2010 and is renewed with Presidential Regulations No. 4 Year 2015.
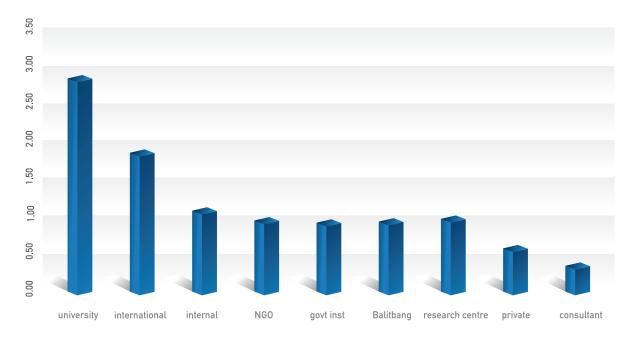
Figure 6: 'Go-to' Sources of Research and Expert Advice Across the Executive
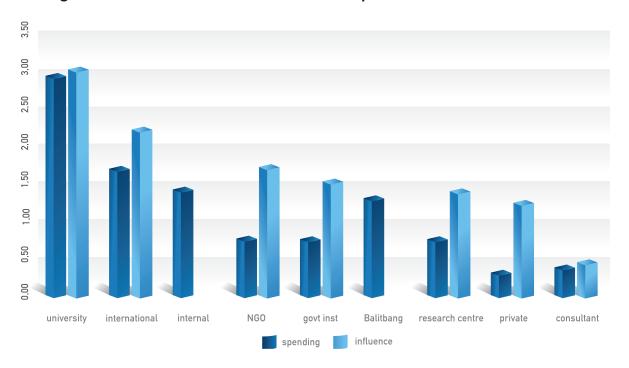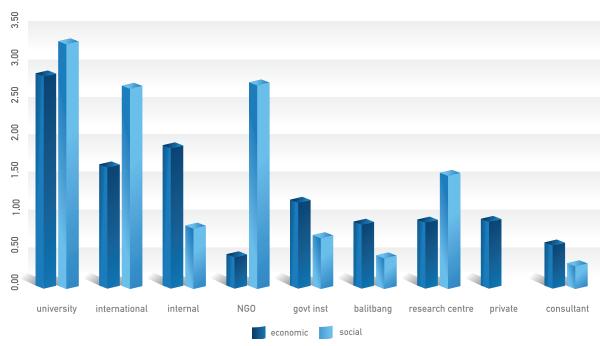
Figure 7: 'Go-to' Sources of Research and Expert Advice Within the Executive

Legend: spending, influence
Categories: university, international, internal, NGO, govt inst, Balitbang, research centre, private, consultant

Figure 8: 'Go-to' Sources of Research and Expert Advice Across Issues

Legend: economic, social
Categories: university, international, internal, NGO, govt inst, balitbang, research centre, private, consultant

Within the executive, decision makers we spoke to said they were most likely to consult experts in universities, both national and provincial, followed by international organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies. Other significant sources were internal sources (within the same or different bureau/directorate where an official worked, but within the same government institution and excluding the Balitbang), the Balitbang (if a ministry had one), other government institutions (like BPS, the government statistics agency), NGOs, research centres (such as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Jakarta-based independent research institute, SMERU, private firms (as well as interest groups) and finally consultants.

Those working for spending institutions were more likely to seek expertise internally (either from within their bureau and/or the Balitbang) than externally (university, international NGO or consultant). This was said by one workshop participant to be influenced by institutions having programme funds that could not be used to fund research, but could fund brief 'assessments' undertaken by external actors, such as university academics, NGO practitioners and consultants. Decision makers on the legislative side of government said they were most likely to consult expert staff, followed by university academics and NGO practitioners.

Universities

To reiterate, decision makers suggested that academics and scholars (with PhDs, and often professors) from national and sub-national level universities were the main source of research and expertise. Regional/provincial universities tended to be consulted on sub-national issues. Universities that were frequently mentioned during interviews were the University of Indonesia, *Universitas Gadjah Mada, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Institut Pertanian Bogor* and *Universitas Padjajaran*.

Our data suggested that decision makers working on social issues (such as those from the Ministries of Education, Bappenas and Women's Empowerment) were more likely to consult university experts than decision makers working on economic issues. This may be due to a tendency for social issues to be contested by a

greater number of stakeholder groups, which in turn encouraged decision makers to seek advice from external stakeholders, including university academics (as well as international agencies, NGOs and research centres) to help shape policy. Those working on economic issues were more likely to consult within the government system.

Decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment often consulted a network of 'Women's Study Centres', which were research units within most regional universities. Decision makers in the Ministry of Finance working on fiscal decentralisation approached the TADF, a group of academics, for advice. See Box 6 below for more on this. Health decision makers suggested they often consulted with a network of up to 32 faculties of public health and medicine.

Some decision makers took courses or taught at universities. This provided a channel for expert knowledge to feed into policy discussions. In one case, close relations between decision makers and university staff facilitated a seminar once every semester at a local university to discuss key research findings and implications for policy.

International and Foreign Sources

Decision makers, especially if they were senior, often turned to international bodies for research and expertise. World Bank experts in particular were said to have provided considerable support to senior decision makers including ministers, vice ministers, directors general and heads of the Balitbang in the Ministries of Finance and Trade. They were known for their 'quick turnaround' high quality research.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank were often mentioned as 'go-to' sources for decision makers working on economic issues, while UN agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO were approached for advice on social issues such as education.

Decision makers working on social issues seemed more likely to consult international sources than counterparts working on economic issues. One official working on social issues said that if the issue was crucial then he would do his best to secure the services of a foreign institute/agency to undertake the research, which would be more convincing. This perhaps suggests a dearth of high quality institutes undertaking social research in Indonesia. It might also suggest that research conducted by overseas/international in-stitutions is perceived as more objective and of

a higher quality than research conducted by national bodies.

Some senior decision makers wanted to avoid being seen (by the media and other commentators) to be too close to international (or western) agencies, such as the World Bank. During international negotiations, for example, some senior decision makers would ensure they sat next to experts from CSIS rather than those from the World Bank, even though the World Bank was providing considerably more support. See Box 7 for how the World Bank supported the Ministry of Trade during international negotiations.

Internal Sources

Decision makers working for spending institutions and on economic issues were more likely to source information from within their bureau or institution than their counterparts working for influencing institutions, or those working on social issues. This was perhaps due to greater funding and more developed internal resources, systems and processes for generating and communicating information.

Some decision makers consulted their staff (who in turn might consult other sources) as well as colleagues. They also consulted colleagues in other units within the same institution. Departmental staff, directors and directors general had regular meetings which provided forums to seek and share information. Decision makers in the Ministry of Women's Empowerment said that, as they did not have sufficient resources to procure research and did not have a Balitbang, they sought research and expert advice from the office of the minister or vice minister.

Some decision makers were able to access publications through an institutional subscription. An official from the Ministry of Finance frequently read papers through JSTOR, an online journal portal to which the Ministry of Finance's library had subscribed. Box 8 explains how this decision maker drew on a variety of sources within her own institution to develop loan products. Another

decision maker in the Ministry of Education said he reads a journal on education policy.

In the DPR, MPs asked their personal staff (for which they received resources from the state) for information. They also asked for information or support from the Baleg (the DPR's legislative support unit) as well as the research support unit of their own party faction.

Non-governmental Organisations

Decision makers working for influencing institutions and those working on social issues were more likely to consult NGOs than their counterparts working in spending institutions or on economic issues.

Some decision makers consulted NGOs to provide an overview of citizen perceptions and experiences, and policy implementation experiences and learning. They were usually based in and around Jakarta. Decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment consulted NGOs that had developed good practice models on child protection. One group of decision makers suggested they were the body most likely to know what people's needs really were. Some MPs who had a history of activism would often consult their social networks, which featured friends and acquaintances who worked for NGOs.

Research Centres

As with NGOs, decision makers working for influencing institutions and those working on social issues were marginally more likely to consult with experts from research institutes than their counterparts working in spending institutions or on economic issues. Again, this could be because they had limited capacity to do research internally and therefore looked to external sources to fill this gap.

Researchers from institutes such as CSIS and SMERU were, on occasion, consulted to provide research and expertise, often with the aid of donor funding from agencies such as UNICEF

Box 7 - Shaping Trade Policy

A former minister worked closely with advisors from both the World Bank and CSIS. Staff from CSIS's economics department, as well as the former head of CSIS, provided significant support to the minister and her team during international trade negotiations. They also provided a sounding board and critique to proposed policy actions. The minister worked closely with experts from the World Bank, for example, an expert on rice who had worked on the issue since the 1970s was brought in to help resolve a problem with spiralling rice prices. However, given that the World Bank was associated with neo-liberal policy prescriptions, the former minister would avoid being seen to be too close to World Bank experts, at least publicly. Even being seen to be close to CSIS could be quite sensitive given the closeness of CSIS's former head to the Suharto regime before the 1990s. Some interactions were informal while others were formal. There was a risk that the minister's successor would shun the same advisors, given they might be seen as 'her people'.

Box 8 - Developing Loan Products in the Ministry of Finance

The head of the sub-directorate for regional loans within the Ministry of Finance is responsible for calculating the upper limit of municipal bonds every year. To do this, she needs to calculate the total amount of loans for local government and the maximum savings for each local government, based on their fiscal capacity. She acquires GDP projections from colleagues in the Fiscal Policy Office, as well as local borrowing data and local government fiscal capacity from the Directorate General for the Treasury and the Directorate General of Debt Management. Calculations are done in her sub-directorate.

When she is developing new loan products she requires research. For example, when producing regional infrastructure development funds or municipal bonds, the concepts have already been developed but she wants to develop the products further, by doing research. At the Ministry of Finance this is easier, as its library subscribes to online journal portals such as JSTOR. She also has some useful books that she acquired when she was a student. She was keen to base new products on something substantive, rather than on her own ideas, so she has read research on how municipal bonds work in countries like Australia, the United States and Switzerland. She has learnt several things from reading papers and has made recommendations to her manager.

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or the World Bank. Other institutes mentioned by decision makers included the social research institution, AKATIGA, Survey Meter and the Center for Systems. Few of KSI's supply-side partners were mentioned by decision makers.

Balitbang

Decision makers from spending institutions tended to consult colleagues in the Balitbang, not only as part of formal research agenda setting and procurement processes but also on an ad hoc informal basis. This was the case in the Ministry of Finance, where decision makers from technical directorates made both formal and informal requests for information from the Fiscal Policy Office (its equivalent of the Balitbang). However, this was not the case for influencing institutions such as the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection which, as mentioned earlier, did not have a Balitbang.

Other Government Institutions

Decision makers from influencing institutions and those working on economic issues were more likely to consult experts from other government institutions than counterparts working for big spending institutions and on social issues, respectively. This may have been because influencing institutions generated less information and had fewer staff than spending counterparts and the nature of specific economic issues meant they were more likely to cut across the jurisdiction of several government institutions.

Those from influencing institutions such as the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs consulted the Central Bank on issues such as inflation and debt (see Box 9 below). Decision makers from well-connected and powerful ministries, such as the Ministry of Finance or Ministry of Trade sourced expertise from a variety of sources: units within the institution, overseas

offices in the case of the Ministry of Trade, other national-level institutions (for example, one official in the Ministry of Finance sought information from the Directorate General for Railways in the Ministry of Transport), provincial and district-level institutions, as well as those working in the private and non-government sector. Influencing institutions, such as the Ministry of Women's Empowerment consulted thematic specialists from Bappenas.

Members of the DPR received evaluations from the Audit Board of Indonesia on a regular basis.

Private Entities and Interest Groups

Some decision makers suggested they invited experts from private entities and interest groups to contribute to policy discussions. Influencing institutions and decision makers working on economic issues were more likely to do so. One decision maker from the office of the vice president invited representatives from the business sector to discuss how inflation could be controlled, and representatives from the fishing industry, such as merchants, to discuss the lower than expected fish production in the country.

Most DPR members had business interests themselves or had networks of business related contacts who they often consulted (and who often approached them).

Consultants

On occasion, decision makers procured consultants instead of researchers to provide answers to policy and/or research questions. Decision makers working on economic issues were marginally more likely to do so. Some decision makers preferred consultants, citing that researchers were too expensive, and that consultants were able to better understand the needs of decision makers, deliver more appropriate 'products' and tended to be more 'client focussed'. One official said consultants were good intermediaries, bridging the gap between professional researchers/experts and decision makers.

4.3 Interpreting the Research or Expertise
4.3.1 Channels Used to Learn from Research/Expertise

The following figures present decision makers' preferences for the channels used to learn from research/expertise across the executive, by issue and within the executive, respectively. Decision makers within the executive, on average, preferred to learn from research studies and expert advice through meetings, FGDs and seminars. Reports and summaries were less significant channels, while the Internet, study tours and video conferences were the least preferred channels. This is not necessarily surprising given that Heryanto (2010) suggested that Indonesians (whether or not they were part of the literati or graduates of higher education) preferred to share important information through face-to-face communication. The few legislators we spoke to said they acquired expertise through the media and meetings. We elaborate on these below.

Box 9: Controlling Inflation in Indonesia

The Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs is part of a working group made up of actors from central and local governments to help control inflation. Among those working centrally, a key member is Bank Indonesia, an institution with good human resources and information systems. The ministry receives assistance from the Central Bank to conduct small pieces of research, such as a paper on exploring the issue of the price of rice and electricity. Of all the institutions with whom they work, the Central Bank has the most 'room' to undertake research. This explains why they are working with the Central Bank on a variety of issues, as well as including bilateral payments and other real sectors.
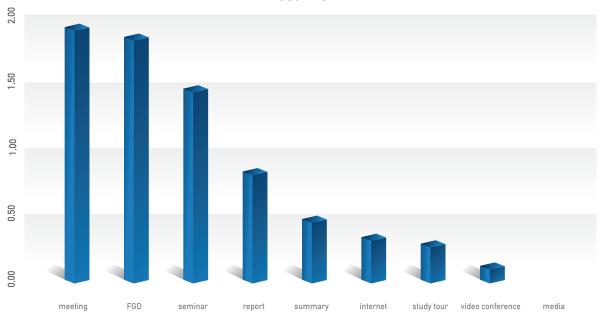

Figure 9: Channels Used to Learn from Research and Expert Advice Across the Executive

Figure 10: Channels Used to Learn from Research and Expert Advice by Issue
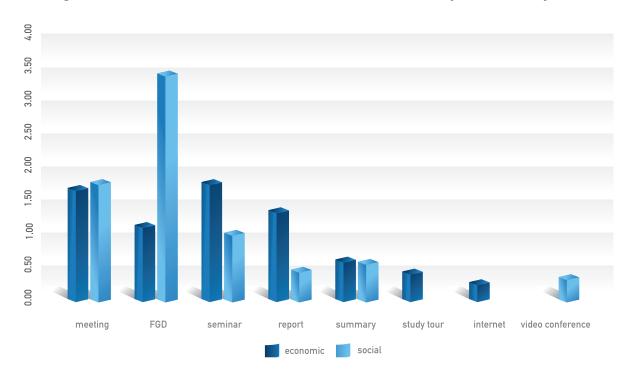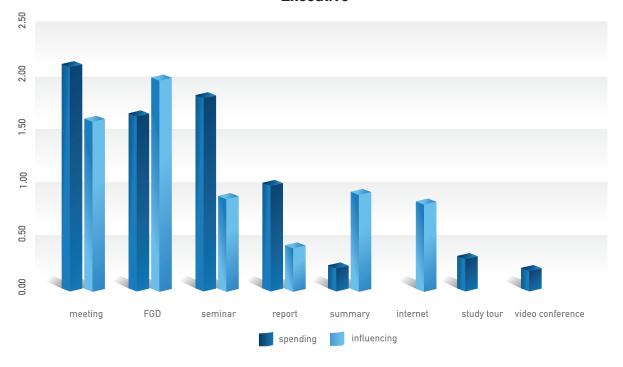

Figure 11: Channels Used to Learn from Research and Expert Advice Within the Executive

Formal and Informal Meetings

Several decision makers mentioned inviting experts such as university academics to ad hoc closed-door meetings to share their expertise. They were often asked to present relevant knowledge they had compiled previously and make recommendations based on the questions asked. On occasion, experts were invited to present their expertise on an issue at periodic meetings which took place within government institutions, such as coordination meetings held among directors in a directorate general.

Decision makers in the Ministry of Health told the research team that if they found a piece of research whose findings had implications for a specific sub-national region, they would invite provincial, district and Puskesmas (community health clinic) heads to a meeting for a discussion. In one instance, they met with five researchers with post-doctoral degrees in Makassar in South Sulawesi to discuss research on the efficacy of interventions within the first 1000 days of a child's life.

Decision makers frequently mentioned using informal means to acquire research or expertise, that is, calling friends or acquaintances to get the 'latest information and updates', especially in relation to businesses and the private sector.

Legislators often met with friends and acquaintances who worked in government, research institutes and businesses on an ad hoc basis, often for breakfast, lunch or dinner in top-end hotels and restaurants.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Workshop

FGDs usually lasted half a day, were held at top-end (often five star) hotels in Jakarta and ended with food and refreshments. Most institutions had a budget for FGDs which could be accessed relatively easily (compared to the research budget, for example). However, a moratorium on hiring venues in five star hotels and limited meeting space within government institutions have made holding FGDs more difficult.

Decision makers working on social issues were much more likely than those working on economic issues to use FGDs to acquire research and/or expertise.

In the DPR, Parliamentary Commissions often held hearings to which multiple stakeholders were invited to present their views on draft bills. MPs, after listening to these perspectives, were said to consult their expert staff before proceeding with bill drafting processes.

Open and Closed Seminars

Seminars provided an opportunity for researchers (who were often commissioned to undertake research) to present findings and engage in discussion with the audience. Researchers would refer to a number of PowerPoint slides, summarising the research, key issues and recommendations, and would be asked leave a copy of the full report and a two-page summary (which was more likely to be read).

Seminars were organised by the Balitbang in the middle or at the end of the year to report on findings from research projects that were requested the previous year. Most decision makers from the institution, including those who made the original request, would be invited to attend.

One official suggested that once researchers had produced a report and presented findings to a satisfactory standard, they may take steps–if the resources were available–to communicate the findings to a wider set of actors by organising an open invitation seminar.

Among decision makers in the executive, those working for spending institutions on economic issues were more likely to learn about research and expert advice through seminars than those in influencing institutions.

The aforementioned TADF met with relevant decision makers from the Ministry of Finance between five and ten times per year on a demand-led ad hoc basis, usually in Jakarta, but sometimes in Yogyakarta. These meetings would on occasion take the form of seminars, where research findings would be presented and to which those interested in the topic were invited.

International agencies such as the World Bank also held seminars from time to time to which senior decision makers from government institutions were invited.

Report and Summaries

A few decision makers said they took the time to read reports and papers. Within the executive, decision makers working on economic issues in spending institutions were more likely to read reports than their counterparts in influencing institutions, perhaps because they were more likely to access results from specific pieces of research they had commissioned.

Reports would range in length. The length of the summary would be proportional to the length of the report, so it could range between two and 15 pages.

As mentioned above, one relatively junior

official from the Ministry of Finance read articles accessed through JSTOR to help her develop new financial products. Another senior official in the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs said he would read relevant reports in preparation for expert meetings and FGDs.

Internet

Some decision makers praised the Internet, suggesting it gave them access to a huge bank of information at the click of a button, albeit not always available in Bahasa Indonesia, and of variable quality. Online portals for international organisations, especially those for the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, were often a key source of information for some decision makers. Those working for influencing institutions were more likely to say they used the Internet, perhaps because they had less knowledge-related resources, systems and processes to draw on than spending institutions. One decision maker mentioned that where time was short and the Balitbang was unable to help him, he browsed the Internet for suggestions on how education at school level could be financed, for example.

Study Tours (Studi Banding or Kunjungan Kerja)

A few decision makers suggested they learnt about research expertise through study tours. Funded by either the Indonesian or foreign governments, study tours would last from a few days to a few weeks. A director from the Ministry of Finance went to Japan (where he had also done post-graduate studies) to learn about railway construction in the context of local governments in Indonesia wanting to borrow money to build transport infrastructure.

Video Conferences

Two respondents said that, given the cost of bringing together local government decision makers, their institutions had set up a video conference room. In the Ministry of Finance, this enabled central-level decision makers to speak to their local counterparts at short notice, avoiding having to transport decision makers to Jakarta to meet in expensive hotels (which in any case was now prohibited). However, decision makers from the Ministry of Health said holding video conferences with local decision makers would be challenging, given that electricity supply was intermittent in several locations.

Media

MPs told us they often received information through a range of media: magazines, bulletins, journals and newspapers. No decision makers from the executive said they learnt about research from experts or through the media. This is counter to previous research by Datta et al (2011) that suggested decision makers among the executive were very sensitive to criticism from various parts of the media.

4.3.2 Reviewing Quality

There were limited responses to questions about how decision makers review quality.

Several decision makers assumed that hired experts, given their know-how, would produce work of a sufficient standard, or make contributions to a discussion based on a significant body of knowledge. Many said, "…they [experts] should know what they are talking about". Some decision makers were aware that if they could not afford the best experts, the quality of the work they received could suffer, but budget or regulatory constraints meant there was little they could do about this.

Some decision makers used their personal judgement and common sense to assess the quality of the research/expertise. One respondent suggested civil servants with PhDs and Masters degrees were better able to review the quality of research. However, the research team was unable to find any correlation between decision makers' qualifications and the processes they used to review the quality of a report.

Research from a Balitbang was usually subject to internal quality control processes. One official from a Balitbang said a questionnaire had been sent out to people who used their research to find out their perceptions of the research, including its quality. However, respondents from this Balitbang could not comment on the findings of this questionnaire as they did not have access to the findings.

Some decision makers said that when they procured research they monitored quality by inviting researchers in at regular intervals to present what they were doing and/or asked them to submit regular reports about what they had done and found. Taking this approach, decision makers were able to monitor the research process and would not be surprised by the final report.

One senior official rarely trusted what her staff gave her, and so sought validation from within her own personal networks.

The team responsible for controlling inflation, which included representatives from the Central Bank, academia and research institutes, would often work together to validate the information produced by technical ministries.

In one institution, we were told that if the minister received a report he would ask a deputy or director general to review it and provide a summary and critique (this task may have been passed on to someone junior). Research reports would sometimes be distributed to other members of the technical directorate to review and make comments, and if a

piece of research was significant, it could be subjected to a FGD or seminar to which decision makers from other ministries would be invited. This may, indirectly, act as a quality control mechanism.

Having explored the acquisition of research studies and expert advice by decision makers, we now discuss factors that constrain them from doing so.

5 Challenges Acquiring and Using Research Studies

Figures 12, 13 and 14 illustrate the key challenges to acquiring mainly research studies, as suggested by decision makers across the executive, by institution type and by issue, respectively.

Among decision makers working in the executive, the main challenges to acquiring (and in some cases using) research studies were delays in producing research and the poor quality of work that was produced. Other factors (in descending order) included: lack of funding; regulations which prohibited decision makers from procuring good research; lack of experts to conduct research and analysis; having limited political and economic space to act on research findings; and a lack of good quality data to use as a basis for research and analysis.

Decision makers on the legislative side of government were said to be under too many time constraints and have too little public scrutiny to ensure their positions were knowledge based. They also expected research to provide more than facts and statistics, and help them build policy arguments.

We group these (overlapping) factors into two categories: those related to the nature of the knowledge and how it was produced; and those related to government agencies and wider systemic issues. However, some factors, such as the limited 'space' to use findings straddle both categories. We discuss these below.

5.1 Research- and Expertise-related Factors

This component discusses delays in producing research, the poor quality and lack of policy relevance of research, a lack of expertise, limited space to take up research findings, poor data, and the absence of an argument to accompany research findings and recommendations.
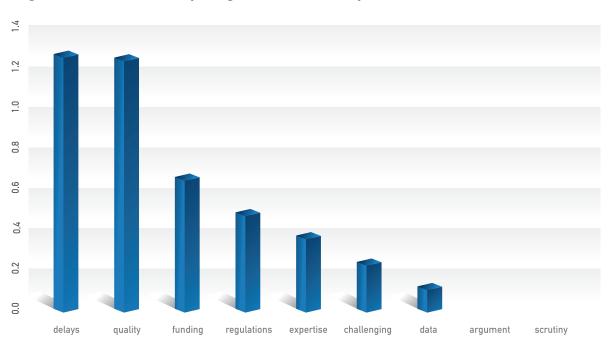
Figure 12: Barriers to Acquiring Research and Expert Advice Across the Executive

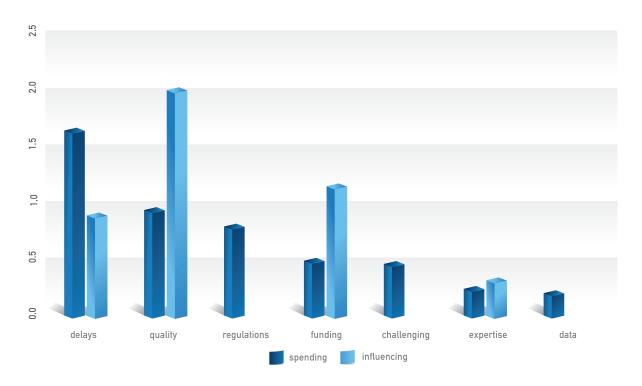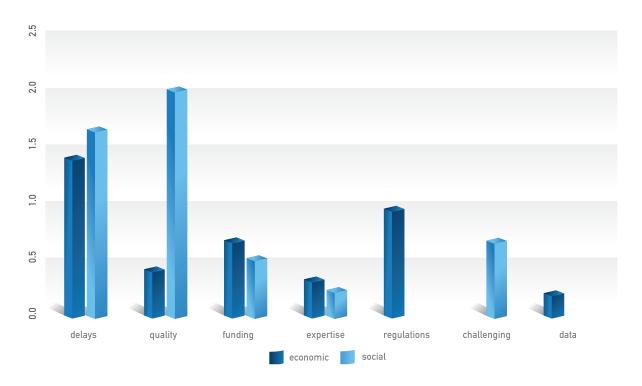**Figure 13: Barriers to Acquiring Research and Expert Advice Within the Executive**

Figure 14: Barriers to Acquiring Research and Expert Advice by Issue

5.1.1 Poor Timing and Delays

A fundamental mismatch between the policy and research cycle was the biggest factor that decision makers said hindered them in acquiring and using research. This was more likely to be the case for decision makers working for spending institutions than their counterparts working for influencing institutions. This may have been because the former were more likely to have the means to procure research.

Research managed by Balitbangs for example often took more than one year to procure and complete, which meant research would often be presented well after it was needed by decision makers to help with decision making. Researchers working in Balitbangs felt they could not compromise on procedures surrounding ethics, methodology and quality. However, they were able to undertake shorter 'assessments', which did not need to be as rigorous as 'research'.

One official said that universities were not much better: they did not always prioritise work from government decision makers and usually took a long time to deliver research. Nevertheless, the TADF in the Ministry of Finance managed to produce research findings within three months.

Even if research was undertaken more efficiently, there were certain types of research that took a long time to complete and risked being irrelevant once new political leaders were elected. The results of a multi-year impact evaluation on secondary education were deemed irrelevant after there was a change of minister and a subsequent change in policy direction. Changes occurring in 'field sites' also meant that research findings could quickly become out-dated. This was the case in relation to poverty data, where people near the poverty line fell into and climbed out of poverty over short periods of time.

Nevertheless, the pressure to act quickly meant there was often little or no time to consider research or expertise in a rigorous way. The Minister for Education had commissioned an evaluation of the curriculum and wanted results delivered to him within two months, when he expected to take a decision. This was seen as too short a timeframe within which to undertake rigorous research.

5.1.2 Poor Quality and a Lack of Policy Relevance

Several decision makers reported that research they procured from domestic sources was often of poor quality. Those working in influencing institutions and those working on social issues were more likely to cite poor quality as a major barrier to acquiring and using research, perhaps because they had fewer resources to procure higher quality research.

Some decision makers said poor quality work was due to the poor capacity of domestic institutes (including Balitbangs, universities and independent research centres). Specific criticisms aimed generally at domestic knowledge institutions included: researchers not understanding what decision makers wanted; researchers having a different view of the world to that of decision makers and a reluctance to show empathy among researchers; analysis being too limited and recommendations being too generic and normative, often confirming what decision makers knew or suggesting policy actions that were already being taken; and findings being too ambiguous, making them difficult for decision makers to use.

One official said a report on the quality of teaching recommended the need for schools to focus on improving students' characters, but did not suggest what elements of their character they ought to focus on and in what way they might do so. Other decision makers suggested reports were too long and too detailed or technical, with one official stating the need for careful explaining and interpreting, usually with the help of the author. This indicates that a researcher's job does not end with the submission of the final report.

A number of decision makers were critical of university-produced or academic research, in particular. Recurring comments included that research was not policy focussed, sample sizes were too small, and methods often focussed on specific cases, making it difficult to generalise findings to the whole country or a sub-region. Another official suggested provincial universities did very little local-level policy analysis and were unaware of policy problems being experienced in their locality and what actions local government had taken to address them.

The women's studies centres within provincial universities were unable to identify who their key stakeholders were. Some decision makers were unhappy at paying the women's study centre to produce a set of recommendations which essentially confirmed what they already knew and what policy actions they had already taken (as above). Moreover, at the local level they were relatively adversarial in their relations with local government, limiting the 'uptake' of any research they produced. They did not always demonstrate good practice, for example by not cooperating with one another, resulting in duplication of data sets and missed opportunities to realise complementarities.

Several decision makers were particularly critical of the quality of research produced by Balitbangs. One senior official suggested the staff in the Balitbang did not have the incentives to produce high quality work. Another official said she had concerns about the research produced by the Balitbang, but preferred not to elaborate.

Many of these criticisms have been documented by a number of KSI diagnostics (Datta et al. 2011; Sherlock 2010; Cislowski 2011; and Suryadharma 2011).

Research produced by international and foreign sources for Indonesian audiences was not immune to criticism. Some decision makers suggested that some research lacked examples that were rooted in the Indonesian context.

5.1.3 Limited Expertise

Some decision makers said there was limited Indonesian expertise on certain issues such as local government financing–a big issue since decentralisation–making it difficult to procure research externally. Not all provincial universities had specialists working in this area. During the validation meeting, one participant suggested that university academics lacked enough expertise even in 'traditional' policy areas such as agriculture, with decision makers likely to ignore recommendations.

Internally, some directorates were said to lack expertise to analyse the constant stream of data decision makers were often subject to. The health ministry would find statisticians very useful to analyse data produced by the periodic demographic health surveys. In a more positive case, an incoming minister of trade had a number of staff in her ministry trained as commodity specialists to help manage the price of key commodities, such as rice and chillies.

Influencing institutions often lacked staff to provide analysis on certain policy issues. Decision makers from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment were eager to find resources for a consultant to focus on specific topics, such as small and medium enterprises, forestry and the labour force. There was little continuity to donor-funded technical assistance when policy advisors, who were often embedded in ministries (and often western migrants), moved on as a result of the end of their contract or shifts in donor priorities.

5.1.4 Limited Space to Use Findings

Several decision makers referred to the difficulties they faced in acting on researchers' findings or recommendations. This was especially true for decision makers who worked for spending institutions working on social issues.

Decentralised authority meant the power to use research findings had been devolved to district leaders and decision makers. There was little the Ministry of Health based in Jakarta, for example, could do to promote the uptake of recommendations. This emphasised the need for local decision makers to be involved in the production of research studies and the communication of expert advice and to demand robust knowledge. It also highlighted the need to create local research institutes and improve the capacities of provincial universities.

However, involving local decision makers in research processes did not always lead to research findings being used. If findings challenged prevailing wisdom, it was more likely to be shelved. Research on health facilities called into question the performance of local-level leaders and institutions. The methods were subsequently challenged, with decision makers who commissioned the work being asked to postpone the publication and analyse the data again. Despite the data being analysed a second time, the findings did not change, the report was not published and no actions were taken to improve performance. In another example, maternal mortality had either risen or continued to be high in some districts but there was a feeling among central-level decision makers that if such information was accepted it would signify their failure to act appropriately.

There were however local governments who did use critical findings to make improvements. On hearing that its district had performed poorly in the National Risk Assessment Survey, an authority in Central Kalimantan asked national-level health decision makers to suggest ways it could make improvements. The attitude taken by local authorities is often said to depend on the personality and attitude of the local *Bupati* (leader) and his or her advisors.

Lack of resources to pay for specific actions suggested by research was also a key constraint. Researchers suggested the Ministry of Education pay poor students two million rupiah each through the school operational budget. However, one decision maker argued the ministry did not have the fiscal capacity to implement the recommendation, paying one million rupiah per student instead.

5.1.5 Poor Statistical Data Sets

The lack of reliable data discouraged some decision makers from commissioning research. Lack of data on local government tax receipts meant decision makers were unable to undertake research on their revenue potential, which in turn meant that targets set were not knowledge-based. In some cases there was a suspicion that for various political reasons, data produced, particularly at the district level, did not necessarily reflect actual outcomes. In other cases there was more than one data set (produced by different agencies) relating

to the same outcomes. In other cases there was more than one data set (produced by different agencies) relating to the same outcomes, and these contradicted one another. Where there was an absence of data, funding priorities meant that budgets were rarely available to commission research.

5.1.6 The Absence of an Argument

People on the legislative side of government suggested they would find research more helpful if researchers used their findings to craft policy arguments, which would help them argue the case for developing or amending legislation or regulation. That is, they expected research to present more than just facts and statistics, appealing to values and recommending concrete policy actions.

5.2 Institutional Factors

This component discusses the lack of funding to procure research, regulatory obstacles and the lack of public scrutiny of policy decisions.

5.2.1 Inadequate Funding

Many decision makers cited inadequate funding as a key barrier to acquiring and using research in their work. Those working for influencing institutions were more likely to face this issue, which is not surprising given their fewer resources.

Some decision makers suggested that if their Balitbang did not undertake research, they (and their directorate or bureau) did not have the budget to commission research externally. If they did have budget, procurement rules which we discuss below, meant they could not secure the services of the best available researchers (local or international). This might mean that raw (administrative and statistical) data to which they had access might go unanalysed, leading to poorer decisions.

This was not to say government funds were not being spent on research activities. Officials suggested that funding was available, but accessing it was difficult. They said that when funding was spent it was not necessarily spent efficiently – referring to the poor quality of work produced by institutions such as the Balitbang.

On occasion, decision makers from influencing institutions relied on funding sources from spending institutions, but these sources were being cut or were difficult to access. A decision maker from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection suggested that the Ministry of Education had cut the budget for women's research. Other decision makers from the same ministry said they could not access the IDR 500 million held by the Indonesian Ministry of Education Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) or the funds held by the Ministry of Finance's

Indonesian Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP).

5.2.1 Regulatory Obstacles

Some decision makers, below directorate general level, said they did not have the authority to commission research themselves (either internally through the Balitbang if one was present or externally). They often had to seek approval from other more senior people which took time, and often ended in requests being turned down. This in turn would dissuade decision makers from seeking approval in future. Decision makers working for spending institutions and those working on economic issues were more likely to cite this as a barrier.

Procurement rules as described by Sherlock (2010), Cislowski (2011) and Suryadharma (2011) meant that decision makers could not use government budgets to buy research externally from top-end domestic think tanks such as SMERU or CSIS. This resulted in several scenarios, one of which was to hire domestic consultants at lower rates who were often less able to deliver high quality work.

Arguably, these sorts of issues resulted in some of the problems discussed above, such as inadequate funding, delays in delivering research findings and poor quality research work. Decision makers were reluctant to talk about such issues in any detail. One group of decision makers, when asked about constraints to the research procurement system, declined to comment, saying we were better off asking the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (MENPAN). We could only speculate that they were reluctant to shine a spotlight on systemic government weaknesses.

5.3 Other Issues

Other issues brought up by decision makers in discussing barriers to using research included:
1. A lack of awareness about how research could help them address policy problems.
2. A reluctance to search for existing research (among decision makers in big spending ministries) especially if research that was potentially available lay with other institutions.
3. Lack of information on how to learn about the findings of research decision makers knew had been conducted elsewhere.
4. Information overload (especially in relation to legislators); that is decision makers received an excessive amount of information which resulted in them marginalising potentially important pieces of research.
5. Inadequate capacity to understand and interpret research findings.

6 Key Observations

6.1 High-level Findings

When making and shaping policy, decision makers working within the executive, on average, were most likely to draw on statistical/administrative data followed by research studies, expert advice and citizen perceptions and experiences. Decision makers working in the legislature were most likely to draw on media reports, followed by citizen perceptions and experiences, policy implementation experiences and learning and statistical/administrative data. They were unlikely to draw on research studies and expert advice.

The main reasons for decision makers within the executive acquiring research and expertise were to: provide context (including understanding problems and issues); help develop policy and strategy; and defend, convince others of, or legitimise a decision. Other reasons included monitoring and evaluating policy implementation, strengthening negotiation positions with others, identifying good practices both internationally and nationally, as well as needing to meet bureaucratic requirements to produce an 'academic draft' when drafting legislation or regulation. Among legislators, the most important reason to use research was as a bureaucratic requirement. Other significant reasons were to provide context and to defend a decision.

Research questions were usually generated in an ad hoc manner and were often driven by directives from senior decision makers. A professional background, as well as support from experts from research institutes, universities and international organisations, helped decision makers shape the exact nature of research questions.

In order to procure research, decision makers in spending institutions such as the Ministries of Health, Education, Trade and Finance could bid to do so internally (through their Balitbang) through relatively stringent procedures (however, they were not guaranteed to 'win'). Middle-level decision makers, in particular, would have to seek approval from various levels, which dissuaded them from doing so in the first place. Further, procurement rules such as limitations on the research budget restricted decision makers from hiring top-end researchers externally (outside the government institution) to undertake research.

Decision makers, especially from influencing institutions with fewer means to procure research internally, often sought to secure research funding from international and donor agencies. In some cases donors had funded in-house technical support which provided the means to procure research relatively quickly. However, many of these initiatives had been cut in recent years. Nevertheless, donors often had their own preferences as to the content of research and the sort of researcher they wanted to do the work, as well as their own procurement processes which had to be followed.

Cumbersome processes for procuring research internally and externally (in addition to pressures to make decisions quickly and with limited funding), meant decision makers were more likely to invite experts to provide advice both informally and formally through social processes rather than commission formal research. Exactly who decision makers turned to for expertise depended on the issue, as well as their own personal and professional networks. Trust played a major role.

Decision makers within the executive were most likely to consult experts in universities, both

national and provincial, followed by international agencies such as the World Bank and United Nations agencies. Other significant sources were internal sources (within the same bureau or directorate as the official), the Balitbang (if a government institution had one), other government institutions (such as BPS), NGOs, research centres, private firms and finally consultancies.

Decision makers working for spending institutions said they were more likely to seek information and expertise internally (either from within their bureau or other bureaus, including the Balitbang) than externally (universities, international organisations, NGOs and consultancies). Decision makers on the legislative side of government were more likely to consult expert staff, followed by university experts and then NGO practitioners.

Decision makers within the executive were more likely to learn from research and experts through formal and informal meetings, FGDs and seminars. Reports and summaries were less significant channels, while the Internet, study tours and video conferences were the least preferred channels. Legislators acquired expertise through the media and meetings.

Decision makers usually reviewed the quality of the research or expertise offered informally using a variety of methods such as hiring what they considered to be the 'best' experts if they could afford to, using their experience and personal judgement, monitoring the research process closely by asking researchers to report regularly, seeking validation from personal and professional networks and organising reviews within one's own bureau or sub-bureau. Research produced by a Balitbang however, was subject to formal quality control processes.

Nevertheless the poor quality and lack of policy relevance of research, the limited availability of expertise on some issues, the lack of high quality raw data and limited political and economic space decision makers had to put into practice some of the advice offered added to the difficulties decision makers had in procuring (and using) research and expertise.

6.2 Further Research Work

We make the following suggestions about further work:

1. Explore the research-related practices of policy makers in relation to discretionary and non-discretionary policy processes, in both the executive and legislative sides of government. In the legislature, work could explore research-related practices under the DPR's main functions – law making, budgeting, representation of the citizenry and oversight of the executive.

2. Explore the research-related practices of decision makers in relation to: specific issue areas that KSI wants to work on; specific agencies KSI wants to work with (such as Bappenas); and both of these dynamics at the sub-national level.

3. Explore the acquisition of other types of knowledge, particularly evaluative knowledge (or policy implementation experiences and learning) to understand when and why it is used.

4. Become better at distinguishing between formal research studies and expert advice, and between formal and informal channels through which decision makers learn about research and key determinants. Look into what decision makers think about the quality of information from different sources.

5. Explore in more depth organisational issues such as systems and processes for designing policy and the space that exists for considering knowledge, the incentives that decision makers have to consider knowledge in their work, and the budgets available to different agencies to conduct research through their Balitbang, or externally.

6. Explore more systemic issues such as the extent to which there is space for knowledge to challenge current policy positions or power structures, the extent to which there is a culture of inquiry, the extent to which there is a culture of finding out what works and what does not (and why) when it comes to different interventions, and the extent to which government agencies are scrutinised for the quality of their decisions internally and by other stakeholder groups.

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Annex 1: Interview Guide

Key Messages to the Policy Maker at the Start of the Interview

1. KSI is funded by DFAT and aims to support the government of Indonesia to improve the quality of public policies. It will do this by helping improve the supply of research from think tanks and research centres and improving the capacity of decision makers to demand and use research in their work.
2. The aims of this study are to: 1) learn more about the context in which policy is made and provide suggestions as to how KSI can help decision makers make better use of research in their policy work; and 2) establish a 'baseline' of how central-level decision makers use knowledge in their policy work.
3. This is not meant to be an evaluation of decision makers or to 'test' the policy maker about what is knowledge and how it 'should' be used. It is intended to be an objective study which aims to inform KSI's work and serve as a baseline against which KSI's progress will be measured.
4. We intend to take between 45 and 60 minutes of your time.
5. We would like to record the discussion, with your permission, so that we can focus on the discussion rather than on documenting what you say.
6. We will not share the recording or the subsequent transcript with anyone else and the recordings will be deleted once the study is finalised.
7. The information generated in this interview will be combined with information from other interviews and a report will be produced with a synthesis of findings.
8. Information from specific individuals will be kept anonymous.

Questions about Their Understanding of Knowledge

The interviewer should state that the first few questions will focus on the policy maker's understanding of knowledge (or knowledge) broadly speaking, while the second (main) part of the interview will focus on their use of research knowledge in policy making.

Rationale for these questions: this aims to assess what decision makers consider to be 'knowledge', their understanding of the relative merits of different forms of knowledge, and the types of knowledge they value most, and indications of decision makers' attitudes towards research knowledge compared to other forms of knowledge. This puts the section on use of research knowledge in context.

- What do you consider as knowledge?
- What are the benefits of using the forms of knowledge you mention?
- Which form(s) of knowledge do you use most? Ask the respondent to rank in order of importance

Questions about Their Use of Research Knowledge in Particular

At this point, the interviewer should highlight that the rest of the discussion will focus on research knowledge and its use.

Research should be defined broadly as 'the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions'. This can include systematic learning through action research and monitoring and evaluation, as well as academic research.

We define 'use' broadly to mean commissioning, assembling, accessing and/or consideration (of research knowledge).

- For what purpose do you 'use' research knowledge? Give examples.

Rationale: this aims to explore at which points of the policy process knowledge tends to be used.

- What factors motivate you to use research-knowledge in your work? Give examples.

NB: Ask respondent to rank the factors they mention. If they mention four factors, ask them to rank them in order of magnitude. We will, by the end of the study, have to group the factors mentioned, as different respondents are likely to use slightly different phrases and words.

Rationale: this aims to provide an indication of the individual, organisational and system-wide pressures on decision makers that encourage them to use research knowledge. It might be that KSI is interested in improving the prominence of some pressures – i.e. institutional pressures (e.g. ministerial procedures) to use knowledge.

Note on analysis: we will be able to say X % of decision makers ranked X as the most motivating factor to use knowledge. We will also calculate an average score for each factor by giving scores to the top three only (if respondents actually suggest three factors, if not, we will just give scores to however many they rank): a first place ranking is given three points, a second place ranking two points, and a third place ranking one point. Average scores can then be calculated for each factor by dividing the total score by the number of respondents who ranked that factor. The most influential factor will be the one with the highest score.

- If you want research, how do you express your need for it, how long in advance and to whom?

Rationale: this will help KSI understand how decision makers articulate demands for research (also responding to specific requests from demand-side lead).

- Who/where do you get your research knowledge from? For what kinds of research? Please state specific organisations/individuals.

Rationale: this will help KSI get a better idea of the links between decision makers and research producers and how this changes over time.

Note on analysis: presented in the form of a very basic social network diagram:

a) In what form do policy makers access research-based knowledge?

Ask respondent to rank the forms they list – which is most useful?

Note on analysis: we can calculate an average score by giving scores to the top three (where possible): a first place ranking is given three points, a second place ranking two points, and a third place ranking one point. Average scores can then be calculated for each 'form' by dividing the total score by the number of respondents who ranked that form. The most influential form will be the one with the highest score. This can inform supply-side efforts to present research, but also demand-side efforts to broaden the ways in which decision makers acquire research knowledge.

b) For each form discussed above, how satisfied are you with the way in which the research is presented? Give examples.

- How do you assess/rate the quality of content of research knowledge? What methods do you use to assess research knowledge?

Note: This is more to do with the content than presentation. Rationale: This may provide some insights into decision makers' capacity to critique and appraise research knowledge.

- What are the barriers to accessing and using research knowledge?

NB: Ask the respondent to rank the barriers they list. Rationale: this alludes to some of the factors that KSI can/needs to address and how prominent they are.

A note on analysis: we will separate out issues to do with the demand side, and those to do with the supply side. On demand, we will group according to whether they are to do with the individual, the organisation or the wider system. We will also apply the scoring system above to identify the 'top scorers'.

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