

**Research Assessment**  
**International Institute of Social Studies**  
**Erasmus University Rotterdam**

November 2017



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## **1. The assessment committee and the assessment procedures**

### **Scope of the assessment**

The assessment committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research programme “Global Development and Social Justice” of the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS). This assessment covers the research in the period 2011-2016. In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021 for Research Assessment in the Netherlands (SEP) (amended version, 2016), the committee’s tasks were to assess the quality, the relevance and the viability of the research programme on the basis of the information provided by the institute and through interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise how this quality might be improved. The SEP also requires the committee to reflect on the PhD programme, research integrity and diversity. In the Terms of Reference issued to the committee, the board of Erasmus University Rotterdam (hereafter EUR) formulated a number of additional, more specific aspects to be assessed:

1. the internal coherence of the research programme;
2. the choice of four profiling (cross-cutting) themes adopted by ISS in 2016, and the innovative capacity of the institute;
3. the ISS vision on societal relevance as described in the self-assessment of the research programme;
4. the relationship between research and capacity development in the Global South, which ISS considers to be an important part of its mission, and a major element of its societal relevance and impact.

Finally, the Terms of Reference invite the committee to provide a qualitative assessment of ISS as a whole in relation to its strategic targets and to the governance and leadership skills of its management, and to make recommendations concerning these two subjects.

### **Composition of the committee**

The composition of the committee was as follows:

- Ms. Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India (Chair);
- Mr. John Gaventa, Director of Research and Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, UK;
- Ms. Joyeeta Gupta, Professor of Environment and Development in the Global South, University of Amsterdam and IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft, the Netherlands;
- Mr. Desmond McNeill, Professor and Head of Research, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Oslo, Norway;
- Ms. Vicky Randall, Emeritus Professor of Government, University of Essex, UK and Vice-President, Political Studies Association UK.

A profile of the committee members is included in Appendix 1.

Dr. Marianne van der Weiden was appointed secretary to the committee.

## **Independence**

All members of the committee signed a statement of impartiality and confidentiality to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the research programme Global Development and Social Justice in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and the programme under review were reported and discussed in the committee meeting. The committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

## **Data provided to the committee**

The committee received detailed documentation consisting of the following parts:

- Self-assessment report, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP)
- Appendices:
  - Staff list, 2011-2016;
  - Publication data, 2011-2016;
  - Key publications, 2011-2016;
  - Output indicators on research quality and relevance to society, 2011-2016;
  - The ISS PhD programme (Academic Calendar; training programme of the national Research School for International Development CERES; course guide of the Erasmus Graduate School for Social Sciences and Humanities; Research Degree Committee, annual report 2016);
  - Benchmark data (Google Scholar, Scopus and WorldCat data);
  - Externally funded research activities, 2011-2016;
  - Analysis of societal relevance of five key research projects;
  - Research assessment 2005-2010 and mid-term research assessment 2011-2013: self-assessment reports and conclusions of the committees;
  - Research seminars organised at ISS, 2011-2016.

## **Procedures followed by the committee**

The committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021 (SEP), amended version, 2016. Prior to the first committee meeting, all committee members independently formulated a preliminary assessment of the programme. The final assessments are based on the documentation provided by the ISS, the key publications and the interviews with the management and with the leaders and researchers of the programme. The interviews took place on 26 and 27 October 2017 (see the schedule in Appendix 2) in The Hague.

Preceding the interviews, the committee took note of the system of research assessment according to SEP, discussed the preliminary assessments and agreed upon a number of comments and questions. The committee also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment. After the interviews the committee discussed the scores and comments. The text for the committee report was finalised through e-mail exchanges. The final version was presented to the ISS, for factual corrections and comments. The comments were discussed in the committee. After the committee agreed on the final text, the report was sent to the board of EUR.

The committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021 (SEP), amended version, 2016. The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix 4.

## 2. Research Assessment Global Development and Social Justice, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Programme: Global Development and Social Justice

Assessments:	Research quality	2
	Relevance to society	1
	Viability	1

### Strategy and targets

ISS aspires to contribute to an interconnected world in which global social justice is the norm, characterised by the full and unfettered development of individuals and communities. The ISS research mission is to produce internationally competitive, critical development-oriented research with high relevance to society (including through capacity building) in order to contribute to the enhancement of well-being and social justice. The current research orientation of ISS has shifted from development of the 'other' to global governance for universal and sustainable development.

Strategic research priorities in the period of assessment were (1) to reward research by introducing research profiles for staff (research active and research intensive) and a tenure track system, (2) to create a stronger research profile and to help integrate research efforts across the research groups in the institute by identifying four highly topical cross-cutting themes: migration and diversity; conflict and peace; environment and climate change; and social protection and inequality, (3) to invest in research by providing seed funding and more PhD fellowships, (4) to build up a good position within the Erasmus University, by participating both in the Graduate School for the Social Sciences and Humanities and in major research initiatives, and (5) to substantially increase the number of PhD researchers.

### Research quality

#### Score 2 (Very Good)

The assessment committee felt that ISS deserves a score between 1 and 2, and decided after much discussion to award 2, while stressing that this should be interpreted at the higher end and tending towards excellence.

ISS has been home to internationally renowned scholars at the cutting edge of development studies for several decades. However, in the past it has sometimes been the case that the few very well-known "stars" have shone in a background of less emphasis on research among the rest of the faculty, who have been more focused on teaching and capacity building in different forms. In recent years, and particularly in the years under review, the focus of the management appears to have changed towards greater encouragement of research among *all* the faculty rather than just a few. This has been done in several ways: by increasing funds allocated for in-house research across the four identified cross-cutting themes and within the existing Research Groups, as well as support for new research initiatives; creating different categories of "research profile" that encourage faculty to engage more explicitly in research and allowing them time to do so by reducing their teaching and/or



administrative burden as and when possible; encouraging more collaborative research efforts, not just within the Institute but with other parts of EUR and other institutions across the world; significantly expanding the PhD programme, including with funded PhD students.

This strategy appears to be bearing fruit, as there has clearly been an increase in aggregate research output as well as improved peer recognition expressed in various ways. Indeed, the ISS faculty may be described as “punching above its weight” in the global development discourse, since the total faculty time currently allocated for research amounts to only 13.12 FTEs. Several publications of the faculty and students have been much cited and are already seen as influential in the wider development debate, and these include contributions not just by established scholars but also junior faculty. In addition, several faculty members contribute actively to research in various areas through editorship of important journals as well as large and small research projects that are bringing together consortia of people and institutions from different parts of the world, and pushing interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary perspectives that are increasingly valued. Indeed, the increasingly collaborative nature of ISS research (with EUR as well as other institutions in the Netherlands, in Europe and in the world at large) is important in contributing to both its quality and its relevance. As a result, in several areas of work, ISS is among the best development research institutions in the world.

However, it is true that, despite some truly outstanding publications, there is some unevenness with respect to quality in the totality of the research output (which may be inevitable in any institution of this size). This is not necessarily because of the urge to relevance (which is especially strong in the ISS, as discussed below) since it is both possible and likely that the most insightful research may come from interactions of theoretical approaches with strong empirical work based on understanding ground realities. Rather, some unevenness may result from the push to generate quantitative results in terms of research output (which has become a common problem not just in the Netherlands but across the world) and in some cases has meant putting greater emphasis on quantity than quality. There are also some areas (such as environmental and climate change) where the research is currently less developed than in broader development studies. So, while the direction of progress in terms of improving research quantity and quality in ISS over time is undeniably positive, there is still some scope for further improvement. Since the leadership of the Institute and those leading the various Research Groups appear to be well aware of this, and are actively taking steps to provide more incentives for research and mentoring of young researchers, it is likely that things will continue to improve in this regard.

#### *Research themes and internal coherence of the research programme*

The overall ‘theme’ for ISS as a whole is now Global Development and Social Justice, which suitably conveys the Institute’s sense of purpose, while not significantly limiting what topics may be covered.

Earlier, there were four rather autonomous staff groups (which have even been referred to as ‘fiefdoms’) each led by a Board, with portfolio holders for teaching, research and projects, and finance and personnel of its members. These were seen to be rather self-contained and static, with little interaction between them, and they were reorganised into the four current Research Groups: The Civic Innovation Research Initiative; Economics of Development and Emerging Markets; Governance, Globalisation and Social Justice; Political Economy of Resources, Environment and Population. While this is viewed as a positive development, the risk of separate silos remains. To

counter this, it was decided to identify - in addition – some cross-cutting themes. The aim here is to encourage more interaction between members of groups, and also assist in the development of new large-scale research projects. The latter is seen as strategically important in order to increase external research funding, to raise research quality, and to encourage research collaboration, both within ISS and internationally. The research groups focus on various research topics, while the themes are supposed to ensure dialogue between members of the groups.

Four themes were chosen: Migration and diversity; Social protection and inequality; Conflict and peace; Environment and climate change. Considerable time and effort were devoted to the process of selecting these, in a process which included ‘away-days’ for the Coordinators of the Research Groups. In addition, three in-house research meetings and one strategy meeting were organised for all staff (including PhD researchers). This bottom-up approach relates themes to the ongoing research interests of faculty members and allows them to pursue their particular interests, while also encouraging more interaction and collaboration, which appears to be an effective and sustainable method. As far as we could judge, the themes are well suited to their intended purpose: they appear to be sufficiently broad to create a more inclusive environment for different researchers to find space, and yet collaborate in different ways. It was also made clear during the discussions held by the assessment committee that these themes are not written in stone and could evolve over time, with new themes emerging and some changing in scope depending upon perceived needs and research interests.

However, some questions do arise, such as whether the coexistence of both groups and themes can lead to some confusion for outsiders (including, indeed, the assessment committee) in seeking to understand ISS’ strengths and focus.

On the other hand, given the introduction of these four cross-cutting themes, they do perhaps require rather more active leadership. It is of course important to avoid any tendency for the themes to ossify and develop into a new set of restrictive silos. However if they are to realise their full potential, it may be advisable to designate particular individuals to act as their coordinators or ‘champions’.

Overall, the internal coherence of the research programme largely stems from a common approach in terms of recognising alternative analytical frameworks as well as encouraging different methods of empirical investigation, including mixed methods. It is evident that this has organically generated some “consistency” in terms of the critical perspective that several PhD researchers mentioned was a source of attraction that drew them to ISS.

## **Relevance to society**

### **Score 1 (World leading/Excellent)**

It is the committee’s view that the ISS record on relevance to society is excellent, and that it has and will continue to make an outstanding contribution to society - internationally as well as at home in Dutch society. As stated in the Self-Assessment report, ‘research at ISS is set up explicitly to have

societal impact with the clear purpose of contributing to a more just world and to improvements in the situation of the poor and the vulnerable.’ (p.4).

Part of this contribution is found in the choice of topics and themes on which the ISS works (discussed above). The overall theme ‘Global Development and Social Justice’ is by its very nature relevant to today’s world, and the broad contemporary themes on which ISS has chosen to focus are critical ones for societies everywhere. In this sense, we can understand societal relevance on at least three levels: a) globally, as these themes are international in scope; b) nationally in the many countries in which ISS staff, PhD Students and alumni are doing their work and c) in reference to Dutch society, where increasingly ISS is providing comparative insights to key issues at home, including for instance, migration and urban development. The increasing integration of ISS with EUR and its several large scale research programmes on issues such as cities, health, and innovation, also strengthen the ISS potential for scope and relevance more broadly.

The Self-Assessment document from ISS provides excellent evidence of the relevance of its work to many audiences. The committee reviewed five key ‘societal publications’, each of which make important contributions in their respective fields, ranging from the impact of extractive industries, health and social protection, political action in the Arab world, and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Based on its strong research and evidence, ISS staff members organised or co-organised some 135 conferences and seminars for general audiences between 2011-2016, contributed to policy briefings and engaged in national and international media, including social media. The evidence of uptake from this work is also excellent, as demonstrated by external citations, research grants, invitations to speak and contribute elsewhere, links and partnerships with a variety of policy makers, NGOs and other social groups, and public awards and public service on other advisory boards or positions (Table 6).

In addition to this empirical evidence, the commitment to societal relevance as a defining hallmark of ISS emerged at all levels in the committee’s interviews, from the Institute’s senior management, professors to more junior researchers, PhD scholars, and administrative staff. One member of the assessment committee who had participated in the Mid-term Assessment also felt that there was evidence of significant improvement in this regard within a relatively short time span. For many faculty and PhD researchers, the commitment to social relevance was an important reason for joining ISS. Clearly, the deep commitment evident across the Institute to linking quality research to critical social and economic issues remains a key core organisational value.

This strong relevance to contemporary development concerns is also clear from the fact that, well before the SDGs were officially adopted by the international community, ISS work had already emphasised that development is a continuing process that covers both “developing” and “developed” societies, and that many issues cannot be understood if countries and research questions are pigeonholed, but must be considered in a more holistic manner. Since this approach is now being taken up by many other social science research organisations, ISS may be seen as a front-runner in this regard.

#### *“Capacity development” and relationship to society*

Part of the unique excellence of the ISS in this area is that it is committed not only to being relevant to society, but to working in partnership with a range of social groups in the generation, uptake and

use of knowledge. As expressed in the Self-Assessment, 'the ISS philosophy is to engage in research activities *with* societal stakeholders rather than only for them' (p.16). In this sense, ISS is concerned not only with high quality knowledge production, but with *how* knowledge is produced, in ways that engage those most affected, strengthen their capacities, and contribute to problem solving by bringing unique perspectives, evidence and frameworks to bear through collaboration with social groups.

ISS carries this out through its unique commitment to 'scholar-activism', understood as a spectrum of ways of working with society. Reflecting this commitment, are the deep partnerships which ISS has with social groups around the world, including NGOs, social movements and other local, national and global networks. An impressive 113 page appendix to the full Self-Assessment report details five case studies of how this commitment is carried out in practice, and the consequent impacts that ISS research has had.

In a post-colonial world, where it is no longer possible to think or expect that northern based research institutes will produce knowledge and capacity *for* others, such a commitment to partnership-based, more equitable and participatory ways of working and to the co-production of knowledge is welcome, and gives ISS an edge over many similar institutes around the world. This philosophy is seen clearly in the Institute's approach to 'capacity building', which has moved from a model of 'training' others, to one of facilitating 'mutual learning' between researchers and practitioners, across old boundaries of North and South, and across disciplines and policy arenas. The increasingly impressive ISS PhD programme, which largely brings students from their own societies to learn not only from their supervisors in an expert-student model, but also from other researchers and staff from around the world who work together as communities of interest within research groups, is a strong example of this shift.

Thus, the outstanding contribution of ISS to societal relevance lies not only in the topics which it addresses, and how its research is used and taken up by others, but also in how it contributes to more inclusive and equitable ways of knowing. In turn, we believe, the research and its impact will be more broad-based, socially-owned and we think, socially sustainable. To strengthen this excellence further, we make recommendations in a later section of the report for how ISS can contribute to the field more globally by embedding this approach even more firmly within its assessment and review procedures.

## **Viability**

### **Score 1 (World leading/Excellent)**

#### *Institutional viability*

While the institutional viability of ISS was already strong, it so happens that it has been greatly enhanced by the relationship with EUR (far from being subsumed by it as might have been feared at first). There were inevitably some concerns during the transition, including with respect to the positioning of administrative staff to support researchers, which now appear to have been mostly resolved. The eventual result thus far appears to be a significant strengthening of research capacity and increase in the potential for expansion in various ways. ISS was able to expand significantly its doctoral research programme (on which more below) and ISS staff and PhD scholars have more

access to new collaborations and networks, as well as different kinds of academic resources. Courses conducted at EUR are now available to those enrolled in the ISS PhD programme, and the integration has also enabled co-supervision with other departments of EUR. Several of the faculty were found to be involved in disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborations with EUR departments, to mutual benefit.

### *The PhD programme*

One of the most marked changes in recent years has been the very rapid increase in numbers of PhD students: from 53 in 2011 to 122 in 2016, an increase of 130 per cent. This increase is very largely attributable to the fact that tuition fees were done away with as a result of ISS being integrated within EUR. The numbers applying rose dramatically, with over 500 applicants in the latest year, of whom about 300 could be considered eligible. Despite this rapid increase in numbers accepted, the average quality of the new entrants may well have improved. Currently roughly half of those applying are accepted, with a great emphasis placed on their academic grades, and also the relevance of their proposals. Our impression is that the PhD students are attracted to ISS largely because of its reputation for critical engagement, and a sense of community. The very recent pilot scheme allowing 5 scholars per year to be fully funded has attracted many good applicants and should ensure that these in particular are of very high standard.

But the rapid increase in numbers has clearly placed a strain on staff resources for supervision. The extent of the increase - in numerical terms - is not readily apparent in the statistics. According to these, the number of FTEs allocated to PhD supervision rose from 2.83 in 2011 to 6.73 in 2016, an increase of 137 per cent - almost in line with PhD numbers. But these figures may be misleading. Certainly, there was some evidence from our interviews that the strain is beginning to show. The most pressing concern expressed by some students, was in slow responses by supervisors and in administrative delays - at peak periods - in preparing for doctoral defenses. Such problems can be eased by increasing staff numbers, but if this is not possible then the conclusion may well be that the number of PhD students has reached a ceiling, and that further increases would be at the expense of the quality of supervision. It should, however, be emphasised that students can, and should, benefit to a very large extent not merely from staff supervision but from discussions with each other - whether informal or in regular seminars.

There is a particular issue of the challenges faced by the category of PhD scholars who are not part of formal contracts that fund their research and are thus not employees. Such researchers do not fall under the HR process; they are not evaluated annually; they sometimes do not feel part of a larger project and thus embedded within the institute; their topics may not quite match up with the expertise of the supervisor; and since supervisors are stretched relatively thin among all students, it is possible that the non-contract PhD scholars may fall through the cracks in terms of research support.

Several PhD scholars interviewed expressed a wish for more courses to be offered within ISS, especially those relating to epistemology and aspects of social science methodology that are not covered in the relatively short courses on offer in EUR. While this may indeed be desirable, it should also be noted that students now have the possibility of attending a wide range of EUR and CERES courses, with the additional advantage of meeting a wider group of students.

According to the data provided, the average time for completion of PhDs is long, at 68 months. It is, however, true that this is only slightly longer than the average for all social science students at Dutch universities, and there are grounds for claiming that these face fewer challenges. ISS has an ambition to reduce this.

#### *Financial viability*

ISS receives core funding from the Ministry of Trade and Development Cooperation via the Ministry of Education, revenues from PhD defenses (based on 90,000 euros per defense), contract funding, and reserves. Over the last six years, ISS overall research capacity (in FTEs for research and PhD supervision) increased from 16.6 to 19.9 FTEs. Due to the increase of income from research grants (the so-called 'second money stream') and contract research ('third money stream') a larger part of the research capacity was externally funded, and the institute became less reliant on direct funding to maintain its research FTEs. After having experienced a dip in external funding from 2012 to 2015, external income from research in 2016 again reached the level that it had in 2011, before the onset of the reorganisation.

At present the financial situation of ISS looks quite healthy as the core funding is a substantial percentage of the overall budget, the expected revenue from PhD defenses is quite substantial, contract revenue is rising, and the ISS reserves are quite healthy – although permission for using the reserves needs to come from the Board of Erasmus University. ISS appears therefore to be in an advantageous position.

The outlooks are positive, but there is awareness of the risks – the risk of further reduction of core funding, the risk of reduced revenues from PhD bonuses, and the risk of variation in contract research. The Institute is also thinking about innovative ways in which to address these possible risks, such as possibly renting out parts of the building, and how current research themes can be connected with major social challenges such that they can generate more research resources.

#### *Leadership and governance*

The current leadership has clearly displayed a combination of dynamism, flexibility, willingness to listen and innovation that appears to have served the Institute well. There seems to be a strong ability to learn and adapt and respond to differing conditions, as evidenced by the response to the Mid-Term Assessment and the manner of integration with EUR. What is particularly impressive is the fact that the management seems to have opened up possibilities for shared and collaborative leadership across ISS. It was apparent that people felt shared responsibility at different levels. A very good example is the Faculty Co-ordinating Committee, which is an extremely innovative approach to handling issues of staff development and other concerns, with members elected by the faculty. There has been, inevitably, a move to a stronger resource culture, but while trying to keep the atmosphere non-competitive (although there is a danger in that regard).

#### **Research integrity policy**

From the documentation provided and conversations with researchers at all levels, the assessment committee was more than satisfied that ISS recognises the importance of establishing a strong and effective policy regarding research integrity. It adheres to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice, as adopted by Erasmus University, which sets out its requirements in terms of five

principles: scrupulousness, reliability, verifiability, impartiality and independence. All ISS researchers must sign a Declaration of Scientific Integrity at the outset, which states their commitment to these principles. The ISS has expanded on the original Netherlands code of conduct, adding a coda to the Declaration which elaborates on these principles in the context of the kinds of research undertaken in the Institute. It also has a Research Ethics Committee, which drafted this code, and provides guidance.

The concept of research integrity potentially covers a number of different issues. The ISS through the Research Ethics Committee and the Research Degree Committee has introduced a series of practices aimed at instilling awareness of the need for scientific integrity, especially in regard to plagiarism and data management and storage. The Institute is committed to socially relevant research, based on explicit normative principles, working with stake-holders and even taking on the role of 'scholar activist'. There is nonetheless a clear understanding that this should not be at the expense of scientific rigour (or intellectual integrity), an imperative reinforced of course by the need to publish in highly-rated journals and to submit to peer review.

Whilst the panel is happy with, and indeed congratulates the Institute on, the general measures taken to promote research integrity, it would wish to emphasise the continuing need, given the socially collaborative nature of the research undertaken at ISS, for researchers and research managers to recognise their responsibilities towards their partners in the field. They owe a special 'Duty of Care' towards the people they work with who may, as a result of this collaboration, be exposed to real dangers. Similarly there should be ongoing engagement with, and reflection on, the need wherever possible to share access to data and other benefits with these research partners.

The panel is particularly concerned that due attention be paid to integrity issues concerning sources of external funding. As the Institute becomes increasingly less able to rely on government funding for research, it will need to be careful about which bodies it accepts as alternative sources, and on what terms. In play here there are important issues of ethical and authorial independence. But also at stake could be the reputation, or perceived integrity, of the research programme (and indeed the ISS itself). Injudicious choice of donors could have repercussions for how others view the Institute and specifically for future opportunities for research collaboration.

### **Diversity**

ISS has been known for its emphasis on diversity, both in terms of its student intake and its faculty. Indeed, the current cohort of students and PhD researchers appears to come from even more diverse backgrounds than before, not just in terms of regional/locational background but also disciplinary background and past experience. There is no doubt that this greatly contributes to the richness of the learning experience for everyone at ISS, including faculty. The gender balance in both faculty and staff appears to be reasonably good as well. However, it is worth noting that regional diversity is being affected in that there have been several retirements among the staff of people hailing from the Global South, while recent hires of young faculty appear to be mainly from the Global North. It is particularly important for an institution devoted to development studies to be proactive in finding faculty from different parts of the world, not only because they bring particular knowledge and expertise, but also because they can serve as role models to the students and PhD scholars.

### 3. Recommendations

#### 1. Continue to prioritise and reward research excellence

As noted, above, there are very good examples of research excellence within ISS, but these are not uniform. In recent years, ISS has prioritised research even further, with a focus on high quality research by all faculty, in addition to the teaching and capacity building responsibilities. We commend the current course of action and expect that the positive trajectory would lead towards a score of 'excellent' in future years.

#### 2. Continue to improve and expand on existing work across North-South boundaries

ISS should continue to expand and develop its innovative work in ways that cut across old boundaries of 'North-South', or 'developed-developing' societies. In so doing, ISS should not lessen its global commitments, but continue to strengthen its comparative advantage, including through its links to Erasmus University and other Dutch universities and social groups, to promote comparative research, dialogue and mutual learning on development and social justice issues between Dutch and European society, and the rest of the world.

#### 3. Flexibility on cross-cutting themes

ISS should seek to ensure that the development of cross-cutting themes is a continuous and dynamic process rather than one which occurs only every few years; opening up the possibility of introducing new themes in response to interesting and important societal challenges.

#### 4. Leadership on cross-cutting themes

Since the current cross-cutting themes also need to yield their full potential, we recommend that for each of the four themes, a named individual is designated to act as its voice and 'champion'.

#### 5. External research funding

As the number and variety of funding sources increases, it will become necessary for ISS to become more concerned about reputational risk. We recommend that ISS considers developing a code of ethics with respect to from where and under what conditions funds are accepted.

#### 6. Criteria for staff assessment

One of the requirements included in the criteria for assessment, after their initial three-year period, is that a staff member has been successful in obtaining a research grant – either as an individual or member of a team. We recognise the imperative of increasing external research funding, but, given that one can have an excellent research bid and still not get funded due to external factors, we suggest that this criterion might be more flexibly interpreted. For example, receiving an Erasmus Fellowship could be an alternative criterion.



## 7. PhD scholars

We recommend that there be a 'caretaker/coordinator' for non-contract PhD scholars as a first port of call for various concerns they may have, especially given the international and varied background of many such students. In addition, for all PhD researchers, some preliminary discussions between supervisors and students with respect to the opportunities and constraints on both sides would help to clarify and manage expectations, ensuring that there is a good understanding of what the student can and should expect of the supervisor, and vice versa.

## 8. Developing a framework to assess quality and relevance

Currently the field of Development Studies lacks a clear frame for understanding and assessing quality in forms of research that engage with society through bringing together different actors, linking scholarship and activism, and making research more participatory and inclusive, which creates a risk that the values they represent will become distorted or misapplied through poor forms of engagement. We therefore encourage ISS to continue its leadership in this field by working with other universities, research institutes, and social groups to articulate and evolve such a framework.

## 9. Code of practice for dealing with, getting feedback from and responding to external partners

The commitment of ISS to societal relevance and to working 'with' and 'for' wider society is an important and unique part of its approach, but one that is mostly left to individuals, projects and groups to interpret in practice, which poses risks that some ISS projects may not live up to expectations of partners or other peers. We recommend therefore that ISS consider developing a high level 'code of practice' which articulates for its own staff and for others minimal standards of what working in partnership with societal groups means (while also recognising that these may be implemented in differing ways in practice.) In addition, while feedback from these groups is often provided at the project level or through personal networks and relationships, the committee noted an absence of partners' voice in any systematic way in its self-assessment process. We urge that ISS consider how to establish more open and systematic ways to invite feedback from its partners around the world in its ongoing monitoring, evaluation and self-assessment processes.

## 10. Ensuring safety and security of researchers and their partners

Much of ISS research is fieldwork based, and many parts of the world are increasingly difficult and/or risky for externally-based researchers as well as those living in those localities. It is important for the management to be aware of all of these various risks, and of the University-level liability to ensure the safety and security of its workers in all conditions. At present several researchers are left to handle such issues on their own; it is important to have an explicit policy to safeguard against potential threats and advise researchers (including locally hired investigators) on how to protect themselves in various ways.

## 11. Ensuring greater geographical diversity in hiring

ISS is encouraged to make proactive efforts to ensure greater diversity in the geographical origins of its faculty and researchers, by advertising more widely in the Global South and if necessary by adjusting the conditions for recruitment to ensure that the desirable candidates are not kept out by very rigid specifications.



## Appendix 1: Curricula vitae of the committee members

**Jayati Ghosh (Chair)** is Professor of Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was educated at Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Cambridge, England where she obtained her PhD in 1983. Since 2002 she has been the Executive Secretary of International Development Economics Associates (IDEAS), an international network of heterodox development economists ([www.networkideas.org](http://www.networkideas.org)). She is Founding Trustee of the Economic Research Foundation ([www.macroscon.org](http://www.macroscon.org)). She has received numerous awards: the NordSud Prize for Social Sciences 2010 of the Fondazione Pescarabruzzo, Italy; the ILO Decent Work Research Prize for 2010; the Malcolm Adisheshaiah Prize for Distinguished Contributions to Social Sciences; and the 2005 UNDP Award for Excellence in Analysis for the West Bengal Human Development Report 2004, of which she was the principal author. She was Co-Chair of the Scientific Committee of the World Social Science Forum in Durban in 2016. Her current research interests include globalisation, international trade and finance, employment patterns in developing countries, macroeconomic policy, issues related to gender and development, and the implications of recent growth in China and India. In addition to her academic work (including 12 books and more than 170 articles), she is a regular columnist for several newspapers and journals. She has consulted for a large number of international organisations, including UNDP, UNCTAD, UN-DESA and ILO. She has been Member of the National Knowledge Commission reporting to the Prime Minister of India and was the Chairperson of the Commission on Farmers' Welfare of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. She is closely involved in working with progressive organisations and social movements in India and elsewhere.

**John Gaventa** is a Professor and Director of Research at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, and has been a Research Fellow at IDS since 1996. Linking research and practice in his own career, he has written and worked extensively on issues of citizenship and citizen engagement, power and participation, governance and accountability, and participatory forms of research. He also has served as Director of the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, based at IDS (2000-2011); staff member and director of the Highlander Center in the United States (1976 – 1994); Director of the Coady International Institute and Vice President International Affairs at STFX University, Canada (2011-2014) and as Chair of Oxfam Great Britain (2006 – 2011). In 2011 he received the Tisch Civic Engagement Research Prize for his distinguished scholarship on civic learning, citizen participation and engaged research, as well as an OBE in the Queen's Honours list. He has also been recipient of a Rhodes Scholarship and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. His book *Power and Powerlessness* has received multiple awards.

**Joyeeta Gupta** is co-chair of UN Environment's Global Environmental Outlook-6 (2016-2019) which will be presented to 195 governments participating in the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2019. She is professor of environment and development in the global south at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research of the University of Amsterdam and IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft. She leads the programme group on Governance and Inclusive Development. She is editor-in-chief of *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* (IF 1.65) and is on the editorial board of *Environmental Science and Policy*, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, *Carbon and Law Review*, *International Journal on Sustainable Development*, *Catalan Environmental Law Journal*, *Review of European Community and International Environmental Law*

and the new International Journal of Water Governance. She was lead author in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore and of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which won the Zayed Second Prize. She is on the scientific steering committees of international programmes including the Steering Committee of the Global Agricultural Research Partnership (CGIAR) research programme on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry; and Future Earth's Earth System Governance. At European level, she is a member of Science Europe's Scientific Committee for the Sciences and of the Joint Programming Initiative - Climate Transdisciplinary Advisory Board in Brussels. She is also on the Supervisory Board Oxfam Novib and the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. She is Vice-President of the Commission on Development Cooperation and member of the Advisory Council on International Affairs, a statutory body that advises the Netherlands' Government. She wrote and co-authored a large number of books, including the prize-winning 'History of Global Climate Governance' (2014: Cambridge University Press) which won the Atmospheric Science Librarians International (ASLI) Choice Award in 2015 for 2014 in its history category.

**Desmond McNeill** (B.A. Cantab.), PhD (University College London) is a political economist. Earlier in his career he was employed at University College London, and the University of Edinburgh. He is currently Research Director, and formerly Director, at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), established by the University of Oslo, Norway as a response to the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. He has worked on a wide range of topics, maintaining a particular interest in inter-disciplinarity and in linking research and policy. His major publications have been focused largely on governance, and his books include: *Global Institutions and Development: Framing the World?* (ed. with M. Bøås), Routledge, 2007; *Development Issues in Global Governance: Market Multilateralism and Public-Private Partnerships* (with B. Bull), Routledge, 2009; and *Global Poverty, Ethics and Human Rights: the role of multilateral organisations* (with A. St. Clair), Routledge, 2012. He is currently a member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) and Chair of the Independent Panel on Global Governance for Health.

**Vicky Randall** is Emeritus Chair in the Department of Government, University of Essex. She has taught and published widely in the fields of gender and development politics. She is the co-author, with Robin Theobald, of *Political Change and Development*. She has edited volumes on political parties in the Third World and on the media and democratisation. From 1997-2006 she was co-editor of *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. She has also published articles and chapters on aspects of Indian politics; and on gender politics, the media and political parties in a developing world context. Currently she is co-editor, with Peter Burnell and Lise Rakner, of *Politics in the Developing World*, now in its fifth edition. From 2008-11 she was Chair of the UK Political Studies Association.

## Appendix 2: Programme of the site visit

October 26, 2017

TIME	DETAILS OF THOSE ATTENDING	VENUE
09:00 – 09:15	Formal welcome by ISS Institute Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Inge Hutter (Rector)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wil Hout (Deputy Rector for Research)</li> </ul>	1.26
09:15 – 12:00	Preparatory meeting Assessment Committee	1.26
12:00 – 12:45	ISS Institute Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Inge Hutter (Rector)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wil Hout (Deputy Rector for Research)</li> <li>• Dr. Freek Schiphorst (Deputy Rector for Education)</li> </ul>	1.26
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch	1.26
13:45 - 14:45	Research Committee (Research Group Coordinators and Chair) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Murat Arsel, Political Economy of Resources, Environment and Population)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Des Gasper (Governance, Globalisation and Social Justice)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wendy Harcourt (Civic Innovation Research Initiative)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wil Hout (Chair Research Committee)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Peter van Bergeijk (Economics of Development and Emerging Markets)</li> </ul>	1.26
14:45 – 15:45	Network programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Inge Hutter (Erasmus Initiative Vital Cities and Citizens)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Peter Knorringa (Centre for Frugal Innovation in Africa)</li> <li>• Dr. Matthias Rieger (Rotterdam Global Health Initiative)</li> </ul>	
15:45 – 16:00	Break	1.26
16:00 – 17:00	ISS PhD Programme: ISS Research Degree Committee & EGSB Graduate School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Erhard Berner (member RDC)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Jun Borrás (member RDC)</li> <li>• Nynke Jo Smit (Secretary RDC)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Irene van Staveren (Chair RDC)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Liesbeth van Zoonen (Dean EGSB)</li> </ul>	1.26
17:00 – 17:15	Break	1.26
17:15 – 18:30	PhD candidates and alumni <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanchita Bakshi (RDC)</li> <li>• Dr. Jan Fransen (graduate 2016)</li> <li>• Maria Gabriela Palacio Ludena</li> <li>• Dr. Christina Sathyamala (graduate 2016)</li> <li>• Mahardhika Sjamshoeoed Sadjad (RDC)</li> <li>• Zemsem Shigute Shuka</li> <li>• Emile Smidt</li> <li>• Yazid Zahda</li> </ul>	1.26
18.30 – 19.00	Posters ISS PhD Researchers	1.31

Friday 27 October 2017

09:00 – 10:00	<p>Research staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Jun Borrás</li> <li>• Dr. Amrita Chhachhi</li> <li>• Dr. Julien-Francois Gerber</li> <li>• Dr. Silke Heumann</li> <li>• Dr. Roy Huijsmans</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Mansoob Murshed</li> <li>• Dr. Elissaios Papyrakos</li> <li>• Dr. Mindi Schneider</li> <li>• Dr. Natascha Wagner</li> </ul>	1.26
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Holders of large research or capacity building grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Sylvia Bergh</li> <li>• Dr. Andrew Fischer</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wendy Harcourt</li> <li>• Dr. Lorenzo Pellegrini</li> </ul>	1.26
11:00 – 11:15	Break	1.26
11:15 – 12:00	<p>Faculty Coordinating Committee (FCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Karin Arts</li> <li>• Dr. Kees Biekart</li> </ul>	1.26
12:00 – 12:30	<p>Support Staff (Research, Projects and PhD programme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Celinka Roovers (HR partner)</li> <li>• Mrs. Nynke Jo Smit (Academic Registrar)</li> <li>• Mrs. Simona Thalen (Business Controller)</li> <li>• Mr. David Wubs (Project Officer)</li> </ul>	1.26
12:30 – 13:15	Lunch	1.26
13:15 – 16:00	<p>Assessment Committee: Preparing formulation first conclusions for feedback session all staff</p>	1.26
16:00 – 16:30	<p>First feedback to ISS Institute Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. dr. Inge Hutter (Rector)</li> <li>• Prof. dr. Wil Hout (Deputy Rector for Research)</li> <li>• Dr. Freek Schiphorst (Deputy Rector for Education)</li> </ul>	1.26
16:30 – 16:40	Change of venue	
16:15 – 16:45	<p>Feedback form committee to ISS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL</li> </ul>	1.31
16:45 – 17:30	<p>Drinks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL</li> </ul>	Butterfly Bar

### Appendix 3. Quantitative data

Table 1: Research Staff (in FTEs, on 31 December)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Scientific staff	53.1	46.0	44.9	44.7	44.9	44.3
Post-docs	1.5	2.3	2.6	2.3	3.0	5.8
PhD researchers	53.0	81.0	96.0	103.0	109.0	122.0
Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>Total research staff</b>	<b>108.1</b>	<b>129.8</b>	<b>144.0</b>	<b>150.5</b>	<b>157.4</b>	<b>172.6</b>

Note: Other, non-contracted staff are not included in this table.

Table 2: Research FTEs and research profiles

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1. Research allocation (FTEs, according to profiles)	13.81	12.98	12.11	12.16	12.91	13.12
<i>Of which:</i>						
a. FTEs in research intensive profiles (40%)	8.41	7.83	7.27	7.49	9.60	8.70
b. FTEs in research active profiles (25%)	3.85	4.41	3.77	3.62	1.95	3.52
c. FTEs in teaching/project intensive profiles (10%)	1.55	0.74	1.07	1.05	1.11	0.65
2. FTEs allocated to PhD supervision	2.83	4.30	4.93	5.80	6.05	6.73
3. Total research FTEs (research allocation and PhD supervision)	16.64	17.28	17.04	17.96	18.96	19.85
4. Total research FTEs as per cent of total scientific staff	31.32	37.54	37.93	40.19	42.23	44.79
5. Research active/intensive profiles in percentage of total scientific staff time	23.08	26.59	24.58	24.86	26.28	28.14

Table 3: Funding sources of research (in percentages)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<i>Funding of research FTEs (in per cent):<sup>1</sup></i>						
Direct funding <sup>2</sup>	12.9	25.7	25.5	28.8	24.0	11.7
Research grants <sup>3</sup>	6.2	17.1	16.4	22.8	18.1	17.8
Contract research <sup>4</sup>	78.4	53.6	53.6	44.6	53.6	68.1
Other <sup>5</sup>	2.5	3.6	4.6	3.8	4.3	2.4
<b>Total FTEs in research and PhD supervision</b>	<b>16.64</b>	<b>17.28</b>	<b>17.04</b>	<b>17.96</b>	<b>18.96</b>	<b>19.85</b>
<i>Expenditure on research (in thousands of Euros):</i>						
Personnel costs <sup>6</sup>	1,553	1,645	1,675	1,745	1,826	1,872
Other costs <sup>7</sup>	2,206	1,420	969	1,677	1,353	1,750
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>3,759</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>2,644</b>	<b>3,422</b>	<b>3,179</b>	<b>3,622</b>

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding
2. Contribution to research from core subsidy plus PhD premium
3. Second-money stream funding for research from Dutch research councils (NWO and KNAW)
4. Third-money stream funding (including EU funding and capacity-development projects)
5. All other sources of income, including fellowships, rental income, and tuition fees
6. Personnel costs of research FTEs and PhD supervision
7. All material costs

#### Appendix 4. Explanation of the categories utilised

<b>Category</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Research quality</b>	<b>Relevance to society</b>	<b>Viability</b>
<b>1</b>	World leading/ excellent	The research unit has been shown to be one of the few most influential research groups in the world in its particular field	The research unit makes an outstanding contribution to society	The research unit is excellently equipped for the future
<b>2</b>	Very good	The research unit conducts very good, internationally recognised research	The research unit makes a very good contribution to society	The research unit is very well equipped for the future
<b>3</b>	Good	The research unit conducts good research	The research unit makes a good contribution to society	The research unit makes responsible strategic decisions and is therefore well equipped for the future
<b>4</b>	Unsatisfactory	The research unit does not achieve satisfactory results in its field	The research unit does not make a satisfactory contribution to society	The research unit is not adequately equipped for the future