Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence
(BCURE): Data and Evidence for Smart Policy Design

Harvard University
Institute for Financial Management and Research

BCURE India Environment Policy Dialogue Report:
Economic Growth and Environmental Protection through Evidence-based Policy

Held in Delhi July 31, 2014

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I.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) at Harvard University and IFMR LEAD at the Institute for Financial Management and Research, in collaboration with the Energy Policy Institute at Chicago (EPIC), organized a Policy Dialogue "Economic Growth and Environmental Protection through Evidence-based Policy" under the auspices of the Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) Program. The event focused on innovations in India's environmental policy and was held on July 31, 2014 in Delhi, India.

The dialogue aimed at demonstrating how evidence-informed policy can be achieved through collaborative projects between academics and policy stakeholders. In addition to showcasing ongoing partnerships between India's Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Central Pollution Control Board, and State Pollution Control Boards of the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu and a team of international researchers based at Harvard University, the Institute for Financial Management and Research, University of Chicago, and Yale, the dialogue brought distinguished panelists from government, industry, and civil society to engage in a discussion on the future of environmental policy reforms in India.

Through presentations, panels and debate, the event made a compelling case for data-driven policies that utilize research evidence and researcher-policymaker partnerships to achieve more effective policy design.

II.   OVERVIEW OF THE BCURE PROGRAM

Greater use of data and research evidence by policymakers has the potential to dramatically improve policy effectiveness and contribute to poverty reduction and enhanced socioeconomic wellbeing. The BCURE program at Harvard seeks to build a 'culture of evidence' where using evidence to inform policy decisions becomes the norm among a broad set of policy actors. Shifting the culture of policy making will require not only expanding technical capabilities but also enhancing motivation and incentives by building shared recognition of the value and usefulness of evidence. Informed by a rigorous assessment of the policy-making context, the program design incorporates several components, such as practical training for policy decision makers on how to use data and evidence, while showcasing the power of evidence through proof-of-concept pilot projects and policy dialogues. A brief summary of each of the four core components of the BCURE program at Harvard is as follows:

1. **Needs Assessment:** A rigorous assessment of both training and capacity-building needs as well as the conditions under which policymakers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations promote data and research evidence in decision making.
2. **Training**: A scalable online training platform, building on recent developments in pedagogical methods as well as a participatory diagnosis of training needs carried out as part of the assessment activity.
3. **Pilot Projects:** Development and institutionalization of a pipeline for demonstration and pilot projects that will foster a more engaged and meaningful demand-driven approach to

using evidence to inform policy.

4. **Policy Dialogues**: Forums for multi-directional dialogue, interactive problem solving and negotiation, and strategic coordination to advance policy through a shared understanding of the evidence base.

This multi-pronged and multi-level program is built on direct engagement with policymakers and partnerships with respected local research and policy organizations. A common model of engagement is adopted across BCURE-Harvard focus countries, India and Pakistan, with the specifics of the approach reflecting the context's current level of institutionalization of evidence-informed policy, as well as particular capacity-building needs and opportunities expressed by end beneficiaries. The program design is based on the theory that in order for policy to be grounded in evidence, policymakers must have both the technical capabilities to access, appraise and apply data and evidence, as well as the motivation and incentives to do so. Changing norms around the role of data and evidence in policy making require engaging a wide range of stakeholders and creating coordinated pressure for reform through informed debate. Highly visible successes in bringing evidence to bear on policy problems are crucial for building recognition within the policy community of the importance and value of more rigorous approaches.

The program activities, therefore, are designed to address these needs, increasing technical capabilities, motivation, and incentives to use evidence through five intermediate outcomes: 1) Increased experience with using data and evidence through applied learning; 2) Greater awareness of channels through which data and evidence can support decision making; 3) Embedded in-country capacity for training on evidence use; 4) Shared recognition of the value of rigorous over anecdotal evidence to inform policy debates; and 5) Strengthened policy networks, including influential champions committed to using evidence.

III. OBJECTIVES OF BCURE POLICY DIALOGUES

BCURE Harvard Policy Dialogues are designed to bring together key stakeholders from a broad range of policy arenas—which may include, but are not limited to, government, political parties, military, private sector, civil society, academia and the media—in a consensus-building environment around specific policy issues. The dialogues provide a forum for multi-directional communication, interactive problem solving and negotiation, and strategic coordination to advance policy through a shared understanding of the evidence base. Participants are selected to ensure a meaningful discourse and to help identify and strengthen a network of 'champions' for evidence-based policy. In addition, they serve the purpose of highlighting the success stories where using evidence in policy design through collaboration between policymakers and academics has led to smart policy designs and, subsequently, high-impact outcomes.

Each dialogue is designed to accomplish a specific set of goals in a particular policy context. To that end, the exact structure, make-up of the participants, and anticipated outputs will differ from one event to another. For instance, some, such as the first BCURE Harvard Policy Dialogue in Pakistan are two-day events, while others, such as the most recent Policy Dialogue in India, may be

conducted in a single day. Some may focus more on smaller breakout groups, while others will be principally held in a larger forum. Still, all Policy Dialogues aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate the value of policymaker and researcher collaborations for evidence-informed policy-making;
2. Share pertinent research evidence to generate discussion and consensus for potential policy interventions or reforms;
3. Help catalyze future engagements, often in a particular policy sector, which aim to solve critical policy problems with an evidence-based approach. In many cases, partnerships developed in the policy dialogue will feed into the pilot projects under the BCURE Harvard program or other forms of continued interaction.

A key to the success of such dialogues is the selection of participants based on their interest in engaging in the constructive nature of the dialogue and capable of turning the findings and decisions into action. Therefore, design of the dialogue involves an extensive pre-workshop planning and communication stage during which key stakeholders are consulted to solicit their input on the workshop content, structure and objectives.

IV.   POLICY DIALOGUE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN INDIA

Overview

The second BCURE-Harvard policy dialogue focused on environmental policy in India, and in particular on innovative strategies for using data to improve regulation. It was held on July 31, 2014 the University of Chicago Center in Delhi in collaboration with the Energy Policy Institute of Chicago (EPIC), which allowed high value for money in terms of in-kind contributions of space and related resources.

Theme

The theme of the dialogue was "Economic Growth and Environmental Protection through Evidence-based Policy." India's environmental challenges have drawn greater attention both domestically and abroad in the past year, as pollution's toll on public health and the productivity of the economy has become better understood. In 2014, Michael Greenstone, a professor of economics at the University of Chicago and frequent EPoD collaborator, published a paper with a team of researchers that showed that breathing the levels of air pollution to which over 660 million Indians are exposed, reduces citizens' life expectancy by an average of over three years. Meanwhile, the World Bank released a report in 2013 that put the price of environmental degradation at an astonishing 5.7% of GDP. This past winter the international press reported on choking smog in India's capital, New Delhi, while Yale University's Environmental Performance Index ranked India's overall environmental quality 155 out of 178 countries worldwide. Still, a renewed push to speed economic growth has generated political momentum toward dismantling parts of India's environmental regulatory regime. With this context in mind, the dialogue engaged policymakers and

researchers in a discussion about how innovations in technology and policy can achieve both better economic and environmental outcomes—in short, cleaner growth.

Partners
The dialogue was organized in collaboration with the Energy Policy Institute at Chicago (EPIC), a research center of the University of Chicago, and the Institute for Financial Management and Research Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development (IFMR LEAD). The University of Chicago Center in Delhi, which is home to EPIC's India office, hosted the event, which was sponsored by the UK Department for International Development with support from the Sustainability Science Program at Harvard University.

Participants
Participants included a broad set of actors that shape policy discourses and influence decisions, including politicians, government officials, journalists and academics from local and international institutions. In total there were 87 participants.

Approach
This one-day event included contextual and concluding presentations, however, its primary focus was on moderated panel discussions, all of which included question and answer sessions to engage the diverse audience in attendance. Due to unexpected timing constraints for our key speaker to meet his public obligations as a Member of Parliament, we began the day with the keynote discussion, then proceeded to have more technical panel discussions on data and evidence-driven policy approaches. The morning concluded with a joint presentation from the BCURE-Harvard Country Manager and 3ie Deputy Executive Director on the importance of evidence-based policy and researcher-policymaker partnerships. Then after lunch, a select group of researchers and policymakers met in a smaller session aimed at catalyzing collaborative pilot projects through the launch of the BCURE-India implementation phase. The full agenda can be found in Annex 1.

Opening Session: "Economic Growth and Longer Lives: Benefits of Evidence-Based Policy"
The policy dialogue opened with a discussion with Member of Parliament and former Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh, environmental lawyer Ritwick Dutta, and journalist Bahar Dutt, as well as presentations by Dr. Rohini Pande of Harvard University and Ms. Dutt. This provided an introduction to India's environmental policy challenges and motivation for the more technical discussions that followed the panels.

Discussion: Mr. Ramesh, Mr. Dutta, and Ms. Dutt
Ms. Dutt moderated a discussion between Mr. Ramesh and Mr. Dutta on the challenges of balancing economic growth and environmental protection in India. They focused in particular on the system of environmental clearances for infrastructure projects, which has been criticized as an obstacle to economic development. While the review process can take years to complete, Mr. Dutta pointed out that 98 percent of projects are eventually approved. Projects that receive a conditional approval, meanwhile, are rarely monitored to ensure compliance with approval conditions. Seeing similarly

bureaucratic processes across India's environmental regulatory regime, Mr. Ramesh called for a new generation of environmental policies that set strong environmental standards but leave industries greater flexibility in deciding how to meet them. He applauded work currently underway between researchers at EPoD and the Jameel Poverty Action Lab and the Ministry of Environment and Forests to test an emissions trading scheme for particulate matter industrial emissions. "If we are not able to meet our objectives through command-and-control [policies], which create increasing rents, we should instead seek market-friendly regulations," he said. He closed the discussion by highlighting the importance of policymakers and researchers in realizing these types of reforms.

Presentation by Rohini Pande: "Economic Growth and Longer Lives: Benefits of Evidence-Based Policy"
Prof. Pande framed the environmental policy issues raised in the discussion described above in terms of the broader objective of the research-policy collaboration that is already underway in India, namely, to find policy solutions that overcome the perceived tradeoff between growth and the environment.

Presentation by Bahar Dutt on Green Wars
Ms. Dutt concluded the session with a brief presentation on the research and findings from her recently published book, *Green Wars*, which explores the environmental costs of India's rapid development.

Panel: "Data-Driven Innovations in Monitoring and Regulation"
The first panel featured Indian environmental regulators who are engaged in ongoing research-policy collaborations with a team of researchers.

Dr. D. Saha, Scientist D of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), discussed CPCB's pilot emissions trading scheme for particulate matter, which is a collaboration with state regulators from three states, including MPCB, and researchers from Harvard, the University of Chicago, and Yale.

V.M. Motghare, Joint Director of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), presented on a new initiative in Maharashtra to pilot and evaluate a system for public disclosure of industry pollution levels. The program will make thousands of air and water pollution readings from factories the state and rate each facility on its pollution outcomes on a five-star rating system.

Prof. Nicholas Ryan of Yale then moderated a discussion about the advances in pollution monitoring that lie behind these innovative policy interventions.

Panel: "Next Generation Environmental Regulation: Center, State, and Industry Perspectives"
The second panel took a forward-looking approach at the interface between government and industry, with representatives from the Cabinet Secretariat and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Dr. V.P. Joy, Joint Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat presented on his efforts leading an inter-ministerial task force to improve the efficiency of the process of obtaining environmental clearances through an online application-tracking portal. He also spoke on the broader task for policymakers in reforming the governance of infrastructure projects so that the norm of environmental management—that is, ongoing attention to environmental impacts throughout the life of a project—becomes embedded in project planning.

Seema Arora, Executive Director of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, discussed the Centre's recent report "Evolving the Next Generation of Environmental Regulatory Standards." The report is the outcome of a proactive effort on the part of CII to envision forward-thinking reforms to environmental policy and therefore to play a productive role in these debates.

Dr. Sudarshan moderated a discussion with the audience following the presentations, which he opened by asking which of the many recommendations heard at the dialogue held the most promise to win political support and see implementation. Ms. Arora pointed to the reform pilot projects underway in Maharashtra and Gujarat detailed in the first panel, arguing that initiatives that can demonstrate success are the most likely to find political traction.

Morning Conclusion: "Catalyzing Research-Policy Partnerships"
Dr. Charity Troyer Moore, EPoD India Lead and BCURE Country Manager, and Dr. Jyotsna Puri, Deputy Executive Director and Head of Evaluation at the International Institute for Impact Evaluation (3ie), concluded the morning session by discussing the ways in which researchers and policymakers can engage in production collaboration. Throughout the morning, Dr. Puri had been collecting notes, aggregating themes, and highlighting the most important twitter posts, which she put directly into a presentation to give real-time feedback and recap of the event. This proved an effective way to bring the dialogue full circle and focus in on how all of the previous discussions relate to the theme of building capacity to use research evidence.

Afternoon Session: "Bridging the Research Policy Gap: BCURE India"
Following lunch, a smaller group of academics and policymakers were invited to join in a focused discussion aimed catalyzing researcher-policymaker partnerships, where BCURE Harvard Director, Deanna Ford, and BCURE Country Co-Lead, Charity Troyer Moore, announced a second phase of funding for pilot projects under BCURE. Ms. Ford presented an overview of the BCURE-Harvard program and then opened up the discussion to learn from policymakers and researchers how BCURE pilot projects can be most useful. Mr. Motghare from MPCB highlighted the value of the technical support he has received from researchers so far and suggested that pilot projects should focus on this type of engagement. Researchers, especially PhD students and young Post-Doctoral Fellows suggested that funding could be helpful in allowing them to solidify partnerships they were establishing with policymakers through travel, stipends and analytical support (either through a research assistant or in some cases a programmer). Finally, Dr. Rahul Tongia from the Brookings Institute presented on some of the work they are doing and ideas for possible projects.

V. CHALLENGES, REFLECTIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED

This, the second BCURE-Harvard Policy Dialogue, while similar in many of its intended outcomes, was also quite different from our first, on Civil Service Reform in Pakistan. Some of the key differences include: a) this conference was a one-day event as compared to the two-day conference in Pakistan; b) this dialogue had a particular policy-area focus of environmental protection, rather than the broader topic of civil service reform; c) the event was hosted at the University of Chicago Center in Delhi (an academic institute) rather than with a policy partner; d) there was no "captive audience" in India, in the form of students of the National School of Public Policy in Pakistan who were required to attend, which meant that all seats needed to be filled by participants with a particular interest and competing demands on their time; and finally, e) there was less of a focus on matchmaking, because there were fewer nascent researcher-policymaker projects in the works leading up to the dialogue.

Some of the reasons for running the event differently were due to the desire to experiment with different policy dialogue designs, such as the one-day versus the two-day model, while other differences were a product of the contextual country-specific factors, such as the policy space, existing relationships, and opportunities.

Overall, the event proved an effective way to highlight ongoing and successful data and evidence-based policy innovations, build a case for better use of research evidence in environmental policy in India, and lay the groundwork for future partnerships and collaborative researcher-policymaker partnerships, primarily through BCURE-Harvard Pilot Projects. General success notwithstanding, the team also learned important lessons that will help improve the efficacy of future BCURE Policy Dialogues.

VI. ANNEXURES

Annex 1. Program Agenda

MORNING AGENDA: Economic Growth and Environmental Protection through Evidence-Based Policy Thursday, 31 July, 2014		
Time	**Agenda Item**	**Speaker(s)**
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Registration and Coffee	
10:00 AM- 10:15 AM	Economic Growth and Longer Lives: The Benefits of Evidence-Based Policymaking	Dr. Rohini Pande, Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School.
10:15 AM - 11:00 AM	Conversation on Economic Growth and Environmental Protection: Are there Trade Offs?	Jairam Ramesh, Member of Parliament, former Minister of Environment and Forests Ritwick Dutta, Advocate and Founder of LIFE Bahar Dutt, Conservation Biologist and Environment Editor CNN-IBN (Moderator)
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Break	
11:15 AM - 12:15 PM	Data-Driven Innovations in Monitoring and Regulation	Dr. D. Saha, Scientist 'D', Central Pollution Control Board V.M. Motghare, Joint Director, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board Prof. Nick Ryan, Yale University (Moderator)
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM	Next Generation Environmental Regulation: Center, State and Industry Perspectives	Dr. V.P. Joy, Joint Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat Seema Arora, Executive Director, Confederation of Indian Industry Dr. Anant Sudarshan, EPIC at University of Chicago (Moderator)
1:15 PM - 1:30 PM	Catalyzing Research-Policy Partnerships and Concluding Remarks	Dr. Jyotsna Puri, Deputy Executive Director, 3ie Dr. Charity Troyer Moore, India Lead, Evidence for Policy Design
1:30 PM -	Lunch	

2:30 PM	

AFTERNOON AGENDA: **Economic Growth and Environmental Protection through Evidence-Based Policy** **Thursday, 31 July, 2014**		
Time	**Agenda Item**	**Speaker(s)**
2:30 PM - 2:45 PM	Bridging the Research Policy Gap: BCURE India	Deanna Ford, Director, Evidence for Policy Design Dr. Charity Troyer Moore, India Lead, Evidence for Policy Design
2:45 PM - 3:30 PM	Achieving Better Regulation Through Research and Policy Collaboration	Working Group Session