

Management Response – ‘Getting Research Into Policy and Practice’ Learning trajectory

Between December 2022 and December 2024, a mid-term evaluation was conducted with partners from the five-year (2022–2026) Belgian government-funded programme *Connecting the Dots – Higher Education and Science for a Healthier World* (FA5). The focus was on Getting Research into Policy and Practice (GRIPP), an approach that aims to strengthen the connection between scientific evidence, policy development and implementation. Designed as a peer-to-peer learning trajectory, the evaluation assessed how partners engaged with and applied GRIPP mechanisms and techniques over the course of the facilitated learning process.

The GRIPP learning trajectory has successfully created a **dedicated space for researchers from various institutions to engage in deep discussions** about GRIPP within a peer-learning environment. This engagement has resulted in an **increased capacity** among participants and, more notably, a **strong commitment** to integrating GRIPP into their work. Some participants have initiated or planned a wide range of activities to enhance GRIPP implementation within their organizations and research projects. Moreover, they have actively disseminated their learnings to colleagues, departments, and, in some cases, beyond their institutions. While the immediate impact of these efforts is difficult to quantify, the learning trajectory has evidently achieved its core objective—**sharing knowledge in a meaningful way that extends beyond the initial cohort**.

While significant strides have been made, we recognize that GRIPP progress in institutional integration varies. The GRIPP learning trajectory has successfully created a peer-learning space that strengthened participants’ capacity and commitment. Several institutions have taken concrete steps, such as developing institutional GRIPP plans, engaging communication teams, and embedding GRIPP into project proposal. However, widespread institutional adoption was stated to remain a challenge, with barriers such as financial constraints, lack of institutional strategies, and competing priorities still limiting full-scale implementation. The varying levels of GRIPP knowledge among participants meant that while knowledge was shared effectively, structured implementations were not yet universally developed. While the learning trajectory has laid a strong foundation for GRIPP advocacy, further work is needed to transition from commitment to sustained institutional change.

On the 3rd of March 2025 a GRIPP dissemination workshop reflected on key insights and lessons from the peer-to-peer GRIPP learning trajectory, focusing on how it has been applied in practice across partner countries. Highlights included case studies from FA5 partners from South Africa and Cuba, along with testimonials from VLIRUOS and ARES, showing how GRIPP has influenced institutional approaches. The event created space to discuss challenges, exchange strategies, and strengthen collaboration both within ITM and its partners, as well as within the broader Joint Strategic Framework.

Recommendations on advancing future work on GRIPP at ITM and partners

1. Follow up with participants in terms of their impact on GRIPP activities within their research and institutions at the end of the program.
2. Share ToC and/or extracted plans for GRIPP from the ToC with the teams working within and with each of the partners and to identify actions that can be supported within the wider program.
3. Ask participants to report on their progress in relation to the actions identified in their ToC at future partners meetings.
4. Include specific GRIPP sessions for a community of practice at partner meetings.
5. Share information via an email list quarterly.



RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FUTURE WORK ON GRIPP – Monitoring & Follow-up of GRIPP activities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and follow up o Conduct follow-ups with participants at the end of the FA5 program to assess their impact on GRIPP activities within their research and institutions. o Request participants to report on their GRIPP progress in implementing actions outlined in their Theory of Change (ToC) during future partner meetings. o Share the ToC and/or relevant GRIPP action plans with teams working within and alongside each partner organization, identifying opportunities for GRIPP support within the broader program. 	<p>Management Response: Recommendation accepted</p> <p>The Institute of Tropical Medicine recognizes the importance of GRIPP and continuous monitoring and follow-up to ensure the effective implementation and impact of GRIPP activities within partner institutions. The outlined actions align with our commitment to evidence-based decision making and adaptive program management.</p> <p>GRIPP is already systematically tracked within the existing monitoring frameworks of the partners, with the description of the GRIPP indicators tailored to each partner institution and adapted to their specific ToC. Given that GRIPP is inherently linked to capacity strengthening, we acknowledge both the demand for GRIPP activities and the variation as seen in this evaluation in how they are implemented across different institutional contexts. Each institution's engagement with GRIPP is shaped by its specific needs, priorities, and level of readiness.</p> <p>To ensure effective support, we will leverage our current monitoring framework while applying adaptive, targeted initiatives that partners can opt into based on their institutional positioning and needs. Recognizing that GRIPP implementation varies significantly across contexts, this approach will allow for more tailored capacity-strengthening efforts, ensuring that each institution receives the level of support most relevant to its stage of engagement with GRIPP.</p> <p>This adaptive approach will be continuously reviewed, ensuring that the monitoring data collected truly informs the design of interventions, facilitates peer learning, and strengthens institutional ownership of GRIPP activities.</p>
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Action Plan						
#	Actions planned	Deadline	Responsible Office/Unit/Department	Responsible Person/Role	Implementation stage (not started, underway, delayed, concluded)	Actions (to be) taken
1	<u>FA5</u> Include GRIPP as a fixed agenda item in future partner meetings where participants can share best practices	Next partner meeting: November 2025 during Colloq25	ICO	Helena Liekens Wouter Boesman	Not started	

	and lessons learned to recognize and highlight success stories					
2	FA5: Use insights from the existing GRIPP indicators in the monitoring framework in the next GRIPP-focused meeting to inform discussions on overall progress	<i>November 2025</i>	ICO	Helena Liekens	Not started	Generate insights from the GRIPP indicators in the narrative reporting Disseminate these insights within the FA5 partners and ITM
3	FA6: Apply GRIPP understandings to integrate improved GRIPP measurement methods into indicator design.	<i>June 2026</i>	ICO	Helena Liekens	Not started	Document the limitations of reporting GRIPP indicators in the lessons learned.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FUTURE WORK ON GRIPP – Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration and knowledge sharing o Integrate dedicated GRIPP sessions into partner meetings to foster a community of practice. o Distribute updates and relevant information through a quarterly email newsletter. 	Management Response: Recommendation accepted
	We acknowledge the value of strengthening collaboration and knowledge sharing within the GRIPP initiative and recognize the need for structured yet flexible mechanisms to facilitate engagement. While there is clear interest in enhancing exchange among partners, we are mindful that the creation of additional working groups does not necessarily lead to sustained participation. Therefore, we will focus on integrating knowledge-sharing activities within existing or emerging structures such as the Accelerate project to ensure accessibility, join hands with other initiatives, and relevance for all stakeholders.

Action Plan

#	Actions planned	Deadline	Responsible Unit	Responsible Person/Role	Implementation stage (not started, underway, delayed, concluded)	Actions taken
1	GRIPP Dissemination Event , March 2025, [Hybrid]	<i>March 2025</i>	ICO	Helena Liekens	Concluded	Organized and delivered a hybrid dissemination event to share key outcomes of the GRIPP evaluation with

				Wouter Boesman		stakeholders. Shared the event recording and presentation materials with those unable to attend to ensure broad access to the findings. Reinforced the relevance of GRIPP's core objective—getting research into policy and practice—as a continuing priority beyond the project's formal end.
1	Join the Accelerate project initiated by VLIRUOS under the HE4SD umbrella. ITM will step in this project and will ensure that the partners under the FA5 program have access to all the resources and information shared.	<i>January 2026</i>	ICO	Helena Liekens/Wouter Boesman	Underway	<p>During the GRIPP dissemination event held in March, we invited two representatives from ITM who had participated in the trajectory to share their insights—both on their personal experiences and on the GRIPP initiative more broadly. In parallel, we encouraged VLIRUOS and ARES to invite one of their partner institutions to do the same, fostering a diverse and reflective dialogue.</p> <p>To close the event, the lead researcher from KU Leuven presented the Accelerate project, which is currently in its initial phase, offering a forward-looking perspective on how this new initiative aims to build on the GRIPP experience.</p> <p>This initiative was also shared with all promoters of the FA5 outcomes. They were invited to indicate their interest in joining the Accelerate trajectory together with their partner institutions, with the goal of fostering broader engagement and potential collaboration.</p>

Signature: _____

Name and position: _____

Date: _____