CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO ACCELERATE THE OUAGADOUGOU PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH AGENDA
Baseline Capacity Assessment Report

January 2024

Baseline Capacity Assessment Report

Recommended Citation

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CABINET ISER	Office of Innovation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research
CERREGUI	Guinea Reproductive Health Research Unit
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CNFRSR	National Rural Health Training and Research Center
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CRESAR-CI	Office of Reproductive Health Research in Côte d´Ivoire
EVIHDAF	Evidence for Sustainable Human Development Systems in Africa
FP	Family Planning
GEEP	Group for the Study and Teaching of Populations
GEH	Center on Gender Equity and Health
GPA	Global Policy Advocacy
IASP	African Institute of Public Health
IRSS	Institute for Research in Health Sciences
LARTES IFAN	Research Laboratory on Economic and Social Transformation
LASDEL	Laboratory of Studies & Research on Social Dynamics & Local Development
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MNCH	Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
MSC	Most Significant Change
ONASR	National Office of Reproductive Health
OP	Ouagadougou Partnership
OPCU	Ouagadougou Partnership Coordination Unit
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
USAID/WA	United States Agency for International Development/West Africa
UCSD	University of California San Diego

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agency for All's goal is to improve and sustain health and agency for individuals and communities, advancing health and cross-sector development outcomes including family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH); maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH); nutrition, infectious disease, and HIV/AIDS. Through locally led, equitable partnerships and innovative research, Agency for All will generate new evidence to understand agency and empowerment within health and social and behavior change (SBC) programs. Agency for All works across three Result Areas to develop culturally relevant constructs of agency; strengthen evidence on effective SBC strategies to foster empowerment; and increase the agency of local partners to generate their own research agendas and lead the application of knowledge. Agency for All's research helps to clarify how SBC programs can impact and affect agency and empowerment at individual, community, and systems levels, leading to multiple downstream behavior changes for improved health outcomes.

As part of the Agency for All project, consortium members launched a new USAID/West Africa field supported activity titled *Capacity Strengthening of Local Institutions To Accelerate The Ouagadougou Partnership Research Agenda*. The vision of this two-year capacity strengthening initiative is to support the OPCU Research Agenda and grantees through a co-created work plan to enhance the institutional and individual capacity of grantees to conduct research that will generate new/strengthen evidence on effective strategies to improve FP/RH and MNCH outcomes on the individual and community levels, and also lead knowledge application and research uptake efforts that will catalyze health-system strengthening and lead to improved cross-sector health outcomes. By providing comprehensive training, technical support, and resources on topics including core research skills, institutional development, partnership management, and research utilization, grantees will have the procedures, structures, and standards required to be recognized as credible research institutions able to independently conduct high-quality research and generate evidence-based solutions to local FP/MNCH challenges, influence policy and bridge the collaboration gap between FP/MNCH researchers and decision-makers in the OP area.

From October to November 2023, a **Baseline Capacity Assessment** was conducted to assess the capacities of grantee institutions to ensure that capacity strengthening activities would be reflective of and tailored to the unique needs and contexts of each institution. Specifically, the assessment aimed to evaluate both institutional and individual capacities in the areas of leadership, management, strategic planning, budgeting, administration and finance procedures, partnerships, and systems related to the research, policy advocacy, and communications landscape.

The baseline capacity assessment collected institutional and individual data using four tools:
1. Institutional capacity assessment
    a. Tool 1: Institutional profile form
    b. Tool 2: Institutional capacity assessment survey
    c. Tool 3: In-depth interview guide

2. Individual capacity assessment
    a. Tool 4: Research competency self-evaluation questionnaire

Agency for All is working with 10 institutions to strengthen their institutional and individual research and advocacy capacities to strengthen collaboration between researchers and decision-makers with a view to influencing FP/MNCH policies in the OP region. Over 52 research personnel across 10 institutions submitted the self-evaluation competency questionnaire. The assessment also gathered data for the institutional profile and capacity assessment from the 10 institutions and conducted one in-depth interview with the leadership of each of the institutions.

The grantee institutions reported having developed high levels of credibility within the policy landscape in their respective countries. The diversity of research institutions and young people's interest in research emerged as perceived strengths of the grantee institutions. While the institutions have achieved a few milestones with respect to policy communications and advocacy in the last three years, their long-term vision is to establish themselves as pioneer institutions in the evidence and policy landscape. The assessment found capacity gaps at the organizational level in areas such as resource mobilization and fundraising, advocacy and communications strategy, strengthening and nurturing partnerships, making a case to decision makers using data, and developing and disseminating messages for advocacy. These capacity gaps were validated during in-depth interviews conducted with the institutions' leadership who pointed out similar sets of organizational capacity gaps.

At the individual level, the assessment found that areas such as strategic communications, advocacy and relationship strengthening, budgeting and resource mobilization, grant management, proposal writing, data analysis and writing academic publications were emerging capacity needs of research staff in the grantee institutions. Respondents also shared preferred training and mentoring approaches that might work well for the proposed capacity strengthening intervention. Respondent recommendations included: 1) receiving practical and hands-on training; 2) peer learning and experience sharing; 3) mentoring and coaching; and 4) hybrid learning events and sharing opportunities to network with like-minded institutions and funders.

The findings of this assessment were shared and validated with the grantee institutions during a co-creation workshop in November 2023. As the next steps, the grantee institutions, in collaboration with Agency for All partners, will finalize their workplans for capacity strengthening for the next 12 months.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

Agency for All's goal is to improve and sustain health and agency for individuals and communities, advancing health and cross-sector development outcomes including family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH); maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH); nutrition, infectious disease, and HIV/AIDS. Through locally led, equitable partnerships and innovative research, Agency for All will generate new evidence to understand agency and empowerment within health and social and behavior change (SBC) programs. Agency for All works across three Result Areas to develop culturally relevant constructs of agency; strengthen evidence on effective SBC strategies to foster empowerment; and increase the agency of local partners to generate their own research agendas and lead the application of knowledge. Agency for All's research helps to inform how SBC programs can impact and affect agency and empowerment at individual, community, and systems levels, leading to multiple downstream behavior changes for improved health outcomes.

The **Ouagadougou Partnership (OP)**, launched in 2011, is a regional initiative in West Africa focused on accelerating progress in family planning (FP) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in response to high fertility rates and low contraceptive prevalence rates (CPR), as well as substantial regional individual, social, community and structural barriers. The OP brings together governments, civil society institutions, donors, and other stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate efforts to improve access to and use of FP services and improve SRH outcomes across nine Francophone countries. Its overall goal is to increase the availability and use of modern contraception to reduce unintended pregnancies, maternal and infant mortality, and improve the overall health and well-being of women and children.

Over the last 10 years, OP initiatives have doubled CPR in most countries and expanded access and use of modern contraception to more than 4 million individuals. To build on achievements and address remaining challenges, the Ouagadougou Partnership Coordination Unit (OPCU) has developed a "**Beyond 2020 Strategy,**" which outlines priorities toward 2030. A 2022 research agenda was developed and is in its first iteration to be used with three research institutions to generate evidence to inform investments in FP/SRH programs and policy efforts across OP countries.

As part of Agency for All, consortium members launched a new USAID/West Africa field supported activity titled *Capacity Strengthening of Local Institutions To Accelerate The Ouagadougou Partnership Research Agenda*. The **Agency for All** consortium, a collective of partners specializing in research and implementation—**EVIHDAF, Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) at University of California San Diego (UCSD), Makerere University, and Sambodhi**—are supporting a research capacity strengthening effort for 10 selected grantees of the OP Research Agenda as part of its Beyond 2020 Strategy. The vision of this two-year capacity strengthening initiative is to support the OPCU Research Agenda and grantees through a co-created work plan to enhance the institutional and individual capacity of grantees to conduct research that will strengthen and generate new evidence on effective strategies to improve FP/RH and MNCH outcomes on the individual and community levels, and also lead knowledge application and research uptake efforts that will catalyze health-system strengthening and lead to improved cross-sector health outcomes. By providing comprehensive training, technical support, and resources on topics including core

research skills, institutional development, partnership management, and research utilization, grantee institutions will have the procedures, structures and standards required to be recognized as credible research institutions able to independently conduct high-quality research and generate evidence-based solutions to local FP/MNCH challenges.

The 10 grantee institutions work across seven Francophone countries in West Africa to improve access to and use of FP services and improve SRH outcomes. **Figure 1**[1] shows the regional distribution of partner institutions participating in this capacity strengthening initiative.

Figure 1: Map showing partner organizations

This initiative's capacity strengthening plan adopts a research-cycle approach to cover all aspects of research, advocacy, and communication. The two-year work plan is divided into four broad phases:

1. Baseline institutional and individual capacity assessment
2. Capacity strengthening content development
3. Capacity strengthening and delivery
4. Endline assessment

As part of the first phase, a baseline assessment was conducted with the 10 grantee institutions both at institutional and individual levels to assess their research capacity and needs and to identify opportunities and gaps in existing research and institutional competencies to inform the design and implementation of the capacity strengthening activities.

Objectives of the Baseline Capacity Assessment

The objectives of the baseline capacity assessment were to:
1. Collate and review organizational data of each organization and assess relevant information with a focus on the institution's research expenditures, number of research staff, and status of policy communications.
2. Assess the existing state of institutional priorities, efforts, and plans for policy advocacy and strategic communications.
3. Understand the perceptions and vision of leadership regarding research opportunities to inform future capacity strengthening priorities.
4. Assess the perceived competencies and capacity strengthening needs of the research staff of the institutions.

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[1] Source: Wikimedia

Capacity Strengthening Framework

The project design—including both the baseline capacity assessment and training modules—is guided by the capacity assessment framework shown in **Figure 2** below. This framework is **adapted** from the Global Policy Advocacy (GPA) framework by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), which aims to understand institutions' institutional capacities and needs [2]. The key research activities covered in the framework and baseline capacity assessment tools include:

- Mobilizing funds and launching research
- Managing research partnerships and activities
- Conducting research
- Research communication and utilization
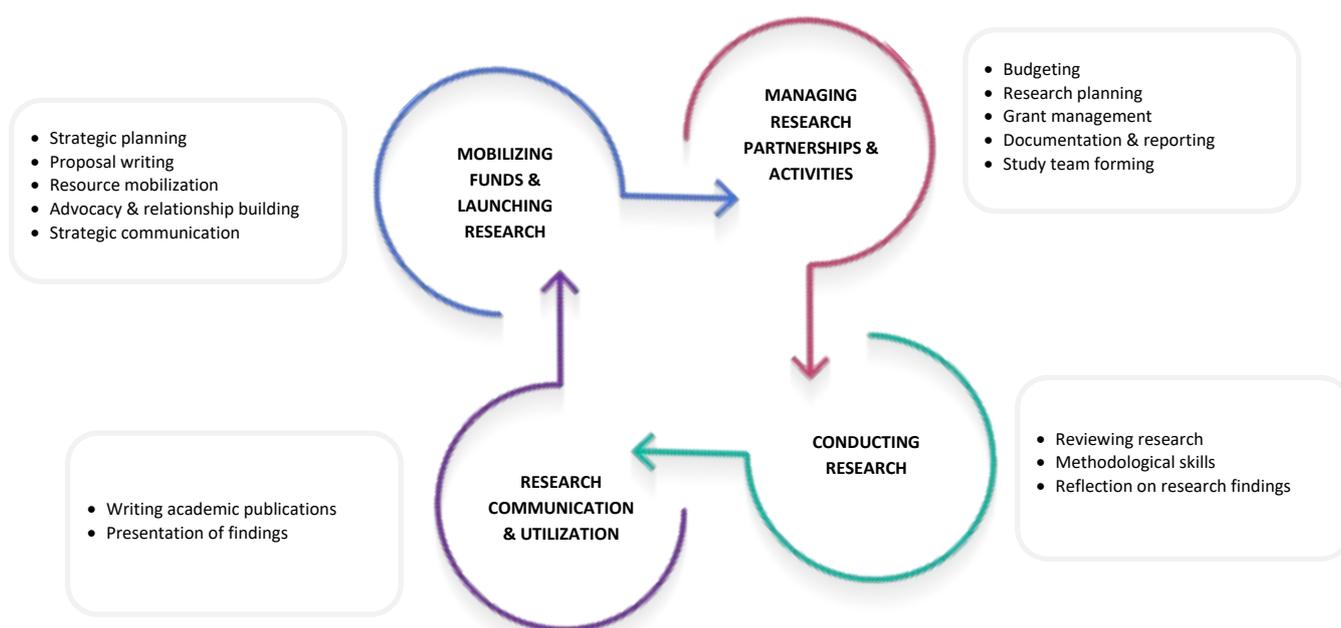
Figure 2: Capacity strengthening framework used to inform the baseline capacity assessment

The GPA framework is a comprehensive, multi-method research, advocacy, and communications capacity assessment tool. The tool has been piloted with 19 GPA grantee institutions in 11 countries throughout Africa and Asia that work on issues related to immunization, family planning, maternal/infant/child health, nutrition, and community sanitation, among other issues. The tool primarily explores four institutional capacity aspects:

- **Ways of working:** Strategic planning, collaborative work, and monitoring and evaluation
- **General institutional capacity**: Advocacy, funding, and fiscal management, staffing, governance, and leadership
- **Specific areas of work:** How well the organization engages in relevant actions or behaviors
- **Capacity strengthening experiences:** Utility, participation, relevance of capacity strengthening interventions to research personnel

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[2] Informing Advocacy and Communications Capacity Strengthening Efforts BMGF-ORS Impact report (2019)

As per the GPA framework, the above four components are intricately linked to impact an organization's overall effectiveness. In line with this, we also considered the potential synergy and linkages between these components during our baseline assessment design, data collection, and analysis.

Methodology

The baseline capacity assessment tools described below have been adapted from the GPA framework, covering the four above institutional capacity assessment areas. The assessment tools were developed using mixed methods research with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data collection elements. The tools were designed to evaluate capacity gaps both at the institutional and individual level. In this section, we describe the tools employed, as well as data collection and analysis processes.

BASELINE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Four assessment tools were developed to collect data on grantee institutions' strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in their leadership, management, strategic planning, budgeting, administration and finance procedures, partnership, and systems related to research. The tools included: 1) Institutional profile form; 2) Institutional capacity assessment survey, 3) In-depth interview guide, and 4) Research competency self-evaluation questionnaire. The research competency self-evaluation questionnaire was used to collect data on individual capacities. The remaining three tools—the organizational profile form, organizational capacity assessment survey, and in-depth interview guide—were used to evaluate organizational capacities. **Figure 3** includes the details for each of the capacity assessment tools. **Annex 1** includes a summary of the content and modalities of the tools.

Institutional Profile Form	**Institutional Capacity Assessment**	**In-Depth Interviews**	**Research Competency Self Evaluation**
Collated data from the institutions across several departments (finance, HR, communications)	Assessed institutional capacity across: **1) Advocacy & communications 2) Work-area specific actions 3) Institutional resources**	Assessed vision of the institution in terms of advocacy and policy, and the organization's capacity strengthening challenges and preferred capacity strengthening strategies	Assessed individual research competencies of all the research personnel in the institution

Figure 3 : Baseline capacity assessment tools

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was carried out between October 9 to November 13, 2023. All assessment tools, except the in-depth interviews, were designed and conducted online using the SurveyCTO platform. The three online tools were self-administered, given the different geographic locations of the 10 grantee institutions. To

guide the respondents, a guidance document was shared with them with detailed instructions on how to fill out the surveys. Self-administered data were regularly monitored in the SurveyCTO platform by members of the Sambodhi team to ensure quality and perform course corrections in case there were any discrepancies (i.e., using currencies consistently for funding and expenditure data).

In-depth interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom conferencing software, with one member of the Sambodhi and one member of the EVIHDAF team. Interviews were not recorded, but detailed notes were included in an interview debrief form. The duration of each interview ranged from 90 to 120 minutes.

Shortly after data collection ended, all quantitative and qualitative data were cleaned and prepared for data analysis.

SAMPLE COVERAGE

Table 1 shows the total number of interviews and surveys conducted. The three online tools were shared with all grantee institutions. While data from some institutions was received after completion of the data analysis and the co-creation workshop, all 10 institutions submitted the institutional profile and the institutional capacity assessment survey, and 52 research personnel submitted the self-evaluation survey for their individual capacity assessment. Representatives from the 10 institutions participated in in-depth interviews.

Table 1: Details of respondents and institutions that participated in baseline assessment

INSTITUTION	INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT			INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT
	Institutional profile	Institutional capacity assessment	In-depth interviews	Self-evaluation survey
LASDEL	✓	✓	✓	1
IASP	✓	✓	✓	3
IRSS	✓	✓*	✓	5
CRESAR-CI	✓	✓	✓	15
CNFRSR	✓*	✓	✓*	✓*
CERRUGUI	✓*	✓	✓	4
ONASR	✓	✓	✓	1
Cabinet iSER	✓	✓	✓	14
LARTES-IFAN	✓	✓	✓	3
GEEP	✓	✓	✓	6
TOTAL	**10**	**10**	**10**	**52**

✓*: information received after completion of data analysis and the co-creation workshop

DATA ANALYSIS

All data analyses were conducted in Microsoft Excel software. The institutional capacity assessment tool and the self-evaluation survey had distinct scales to evaluate current capacities. The institutional capacity assessment tool scaled the quality of an organization's activity from 1 to 4 (1=poor; 2=moderately well; 3=well; 4=excels).

The self-evaluation survey asked respondents to score their abilities to perform activities across 14 areas associated with the research and policy advocacy life cycle on a scale of 1 to 7. A score of 1 implied that the respondent has "no skill at all" and a score of 7 implied that the respondent had an "excellent skill." The survey also consisted of qualitative questions to probe into the perceived capacity strengthening needs of the research staff.

For analyzing quantitative data from these two capacity assessment tools, average scores were taken and tabulated in ascending order, thus reflecting the capacity gaps both at the organizational and individual levels.

For the in-depth interviews, the responses from the interview debrief forms were tabulated on an Excel spreadsheet and later synthesized into two broad themes: 1) vision of the institution with respect to the evidence and policy landscape and 2) institutional capacity challenges. Interview data were organized and compared according to the following themes:

- Current position and vision of the institution in the policy advocacy landscape.
- Major gains made by the institution regarding research, advocacy, and policy influence in the past three years.
- Institution's current capacity to attain the vision.
- Capacity challenges in scaling evidence based SRH/FP research projects.
- Top five priority needs that can be addressed through institutional capacity strengthening.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oral and written consent was obtained from the respondents prior to the interviews and online tool administration, respectively. Each tool had a consent section that clearly laid out the procedures of data collection, explained to respondents that their participation was voluntary, and promised that their data will be kept confidential. The consent section also explained that there were no benefits and compensation associated with participating in the survey or interview, they could choose not to participate and if they wanted to stop data collection, their decision would be respected. Following data collection, the Agency for All team ensured that the source of sensitive information and/or critical feedback was not traced back to participants. Only de-identified data was used for analysis and dissemination of findings.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

This section highlights the profiles of institutions and respondents who participated in the baseline capacity assessment. The institutional profiles show the different characteristics of the partner institutions, whereas the individual sample profiles give an overview of the individual respondents who participated in the self-evaluation survey.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

All 10 grantee institutions were invited to complete the capacity assessment survey. These institutions have been working in areas of FP and SRH and have established themselves as credible institutions in their respective countries. **Figure 4** shows an overall range of the basic parameters of partner institutions. Institutions varied widely—the oldest organization was established in 1993 and the youngest in 2021. The total number of employees ranged from 6–206.

Organization's year of establishment	GEEP: 1993	→	Cabinet iSER: 2021
Total number of employees	Cabinet iSER: 6	→	IRSS: 206
Number of research staff	GEEP: 4	→	IRSS: 132
Research expenditure	USD 25,000	→	USD 168,927
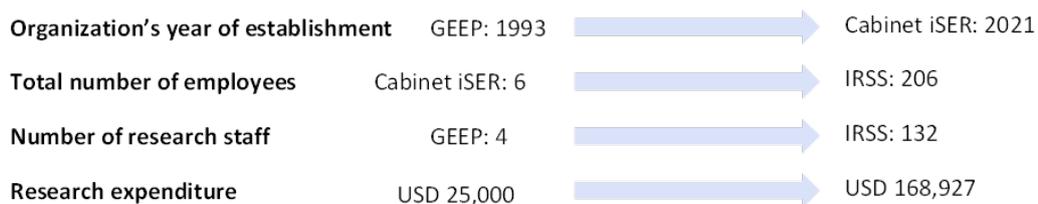
Figure 4: Institutional profile of the partner institutions

INDIVIDUAL SAMPLE PROFILE

For the individual capacity assessment survey, 52 researchers from 10 institutions participated. The work experience of these researchers ranged from two years to over 20 years; their designations ranged from a research associate to a principal investigator. The details of the overall spectrum of the researchers who participated in the self-evaluation survey are given below:

Category	Number	Range (if applicable)
Respondents with average work experience of the respondents (in years)	14	Minimum= 2 years Maximum > 20 years
Respondents with average duration in the current organization (in years)	8	Minimum= 1 year Maximum > 20 years
Respondents with bachelor's degree	3	
Respondents with master's degree	13	
Respondents with doctorate degree	25	
Respondents with professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM, LLB)	11	

Table 2: Details of individual respondents who submitted the self-evaluation survey

Institutional Capacity Assessment

This section highlights the overall institutional capacity across all partner institutions. The section is divided into two parts. The first section shows the overall capacity status of institutions; the second section breaks down and presents different institutional capacity sub-components.

OVERALL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The baseline assessment on the institutional capacity sought to understand three aspects of an institution:

- **Advocacy and communication approaches**
- **Work area specific actions and behaviors** that would lead to an effective communication strategy
- **Resources** an organization is deploying for policy advocacy and strategic communications
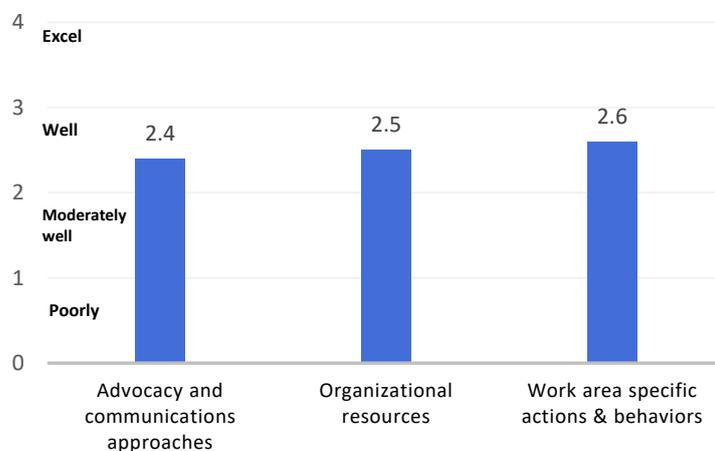
Figure 5: Overall average scores for the institutional capacity assessment

Figure 5 highlights that across all 10 grantee institutions, the overall scores for the three aspects of institutional capacity—advocacy and communications approaches, institutional resources, and work area specific actions and behaviors—are less than 4 (excel) and 3 (well). This suggests that overall, individuals perceived that their institutions performed fairly "well" in terms of advocacy and communication, use of resources, and ways of working together. However, there are variabilities within each of these three aspects and their sub-components, which are further explored in sections below.

DEEP DIVE INTO THE SUB-COMPONENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

This section delves into specific sub-components of the three institutional capacity assessment areas described in the previous section. To probe further on the institutional capacity, the tool asked respondents to score on specific aspects of advocacy and communications approaches, institutional resources, and work area-specific actions and behaviors. **Figure 6** depicts the overall arrangement of the three key areas and their sub-components.

Figure 6: The three key components and sub-components of the institutional capacity assessment

COMPONENT #1: ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS APPROACHES

Figure 7: Average scores for the sub-elements of advocacy & communications approaches

Figure 7 shows the average scores for the advocacy and communications sub-components. The averages scores for **learning, strategy and partner engagement** are just above 2 (well to moderately well).

Learning includes how effectively institutions monitor, learn, and reflect on communications and advocacy strategies. On average, institutions rated the following learning areas from lowest to highest scores:

- reflecting on advocacy and communications monitoring and evaluation data (2.1)
- monitoring whether a policy had the intended impact (2.1)
- analyzing data about the quality and effectiveness of advocacy and communications efforts (2.3)
- sharing lessons from advocacy monitoring data (2.3)
- generating evidence regarding the effectiveness of advocacy and communications efforts (2.4)

Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Strategy involves steps taken by the institution to finance, support, and give strategic directions to communication and advocacy efforts. In general, institutions rated themselves lower on the following sub-areas:

- allocating sufficient budget and staff on advocacy (1.9)
- adjusting resources as per changing contexts or situations (2.3)
- identifying and developing clear advocacy and communications plans (2.3)
- identifying clear policy priorities and goals around which the communications plan will be designed (2.7)

Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Partner engagement encompasses working with institutions or coalitions around a particular policy issue and advancing it within the policy makers ecosystem. Lower scores in this area included working with other institutions or leaders to develop a joint agenda (1.9) and forming or leading groups around a policy (2.3). Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

COMPONENT #2: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Institutional resources include financial, staffing, and leadership support that an institution commits to advocacy and communications efforts. **Figure 8** shows the average scores of the institutional resources sub-elements. On average, institutions rated themselves as performing "moderately well" in the following categories:

- funding and fiscal managements (score=1.9),
- expertise to execute effective advocacy strategy (2.3)
- staff stability and governance (2.6)
- and rated themselves as performing "well" for reputation and credibility (3.2).
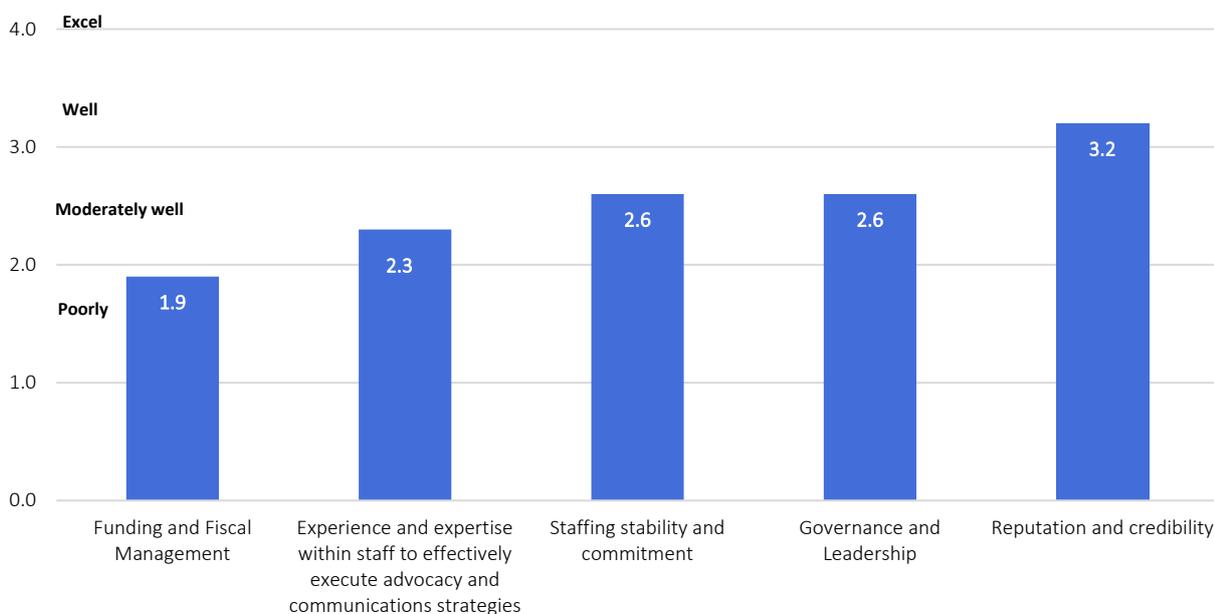
Figure 8: Average scores of the sub-elements of institutional resources

Among the sub-areas in **Figure 8**, **funding and fiscal management** is defined as the institution having sufficient funds and budgets to support a sustainable advocacy and communications strategy. The low score in this area (1.9) is due to low scores in sub-categories such as: institutions having a stable funding and funders' support for an institution-wide advocacy strategy (1.6), and the institution having dedicated funds for strategic communications (2). Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Staff expertise in executing effective advocacy and communications strategies includes whether the staff has sufficient training and expertise in advocacy and communications. The low score in this component (2.3) is mainly due to institutions assessing themselves as lacking sufficient expertise in communication (2.3) and advocacy (2.4). Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Staffing stability and commitment is defined by the degree to which the institution has a stable staff and leadership dedicated to advocacy and communications. The biggest gap under this component is staff stability in advocacy and communications areas (1.8). Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Governance and leadership include the support provided by the institution's board to its communications strategy. In this category, scores were distributed as follows:

- board has a policy/communications committee (2)
- board provides guidance on policy advocacy issues (2.6)
- organization has a strategic document guide (3.1) which provides direction to its advocacy efforts.

Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

Reputation and institution's credibility refers to an organization's standing among decision makers and key stakeholders. The 10 grantee institutions rated themselves as having a good reputation and credibility as reflected by their average score (3.2). Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

COMPONENT #3: WORK AREA SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

The work area specific actions and behaviors component is critical, as it determines the overall direction of the communications and advocacy practices in an institution. **Figure 9** shows that the average scores of each of the sub-component is less than 3 (performing "well"). Institutions rated themselves highest in the following areas: developing and disseminating messages (score = 2.9), as well as using data to make the case, engaging civil society leaders, and developing policy (2.8). Institutions rated themselves as weaker in monitoring policy (1.9) and supporting implementation of policies (2.2).
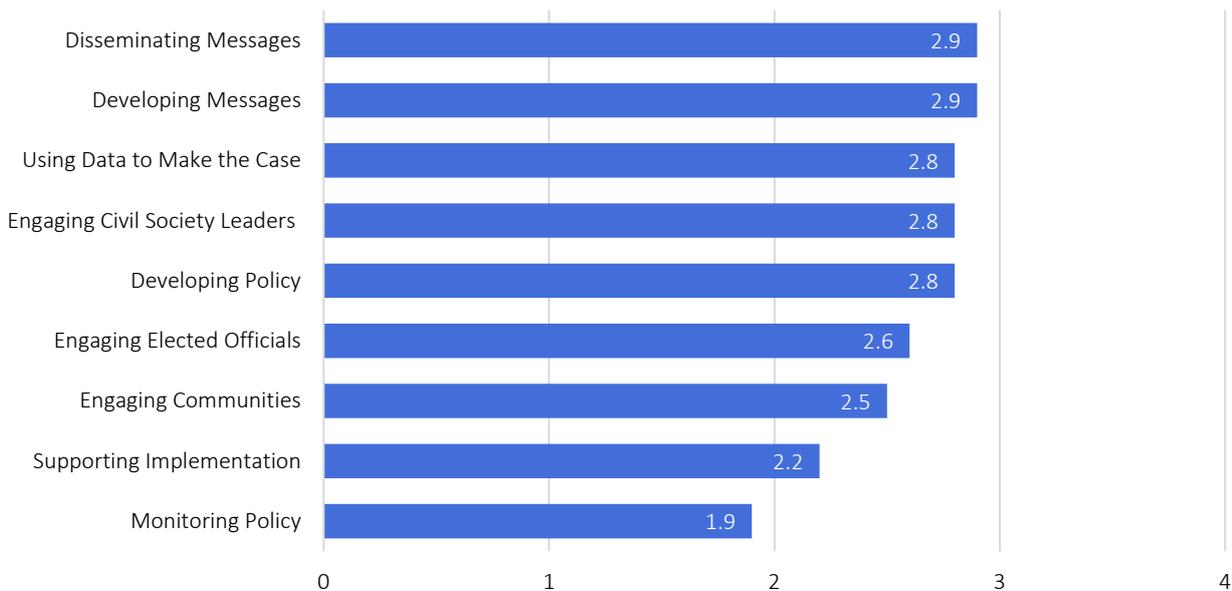
Figure 9: Average scores of sub-elements of work area specific actions and behaviors

At the bottom of **Figure 9**, the **monitoring policy** category refers to tracking a policy proposal and identifying opportunities to align with policy makers on those issues. The low score in this category (1.9) is due to the reporting institutions lacking adequate processes to track policies and support within the policy ecosystem. Institutions rated themselves as having lower performance scores in the following:

- monitoring support or opposition to a policy proposal (1.8)
- monitoring decision makers' support to a policy proposal (1.8)
- tracking government budgets (1.8)
- identifying opportunities to align with a policy proposal (2.3)

Refer to Annex 2 for Figure with all category scores.

In **supporting implementation** of policies (2.2), institutions rated themselves as lowest in:

- leveraging relationships with government to ensure policy implementation promotes positive outcomes (2.1)
- leveraging relationships with service providers (2.1)
- ensuring government leaders can access knowledge to support policy implementation (2.4)

Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

In the **engaging communities category** (2.5), scores were distributed as follows:

- building relationships with community members affected by a policy (2.9)
- educating affected communities about their contribution to the advancement of the policy (2.2)
- engaging with the community to ensure whether a policy has been implemented (2.7)

Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

The **engaging elected officials** (2.6) sub-element consisted of building relationships with government leaders (2.1), using a range of strategies to connect with elected officials (2.7) and educate elected officials about priority issues and solutions (3). Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

Developing policy (2.8) included developing policy proposals (2.8) and incorporating budget analysis into policy proposals (2.8). Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

In the **engaging civil society leaders** (2.8) area, scores were distributed along the following categories from highest to lowest:

- building relationships with civil society leaders (3.1)
- using a range of strategies to connect with them (2.9)
- educating them about priority policy issues (2.5)

Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

Using data to make the case (2.8) is essential since it determines how institutions use data to develop a compelling case about a policy issue for its advancement among decision makers. Institutions rated themselves as performing moderately well among most categories, including identifying what data is needed to make a case for policy advancement (2.6), knowing the source of quality data (2.9) and producing products that support the case with comprehensive evidence-based research (2.9). Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

In the developing messages category (2.9), most institutions rated themselves as performing "moderately well" to "well" in the following areas:

- testing potential messages (2.7)
- using different messages for different audiences (2.7)
- ensuring communication plan addresses a policy issue (3)
- developing clear and articulate messages around a policy issue (3)
- using accurate data to develop messages (3.2)

Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

Disseminating messages (2.9) included sub-elements such as:

- monitoring messages developed by the institutions around a policy issue (2.4)
- maintaining relationships with media outlets (2.9)
- utilizing print media and broadcast media (2.9)
- utilizing digital media (3.1)
- developing communications products (3.3)

Refer to Annex 2 Figure with all category scores.

INSTITUTION-SPECIFIC RESEARCH, POLICY AND ADVOCACY CAPACITY

This section highlights an analysis of an institution's capacity assessment across the three key aspects—advocacy and communications approaches, work area specific actions and behaviors, and institutional resources.

From left to right, **Figure 10** shows each grantee institution's performance in advocacy and communications approaches, work area specific actions, and behaviors and institutional resources. In general, institutions'

ratings varied—from "moderately well" to "well" and "excelling." No organization rated themselves as performing "poorly" in any area.
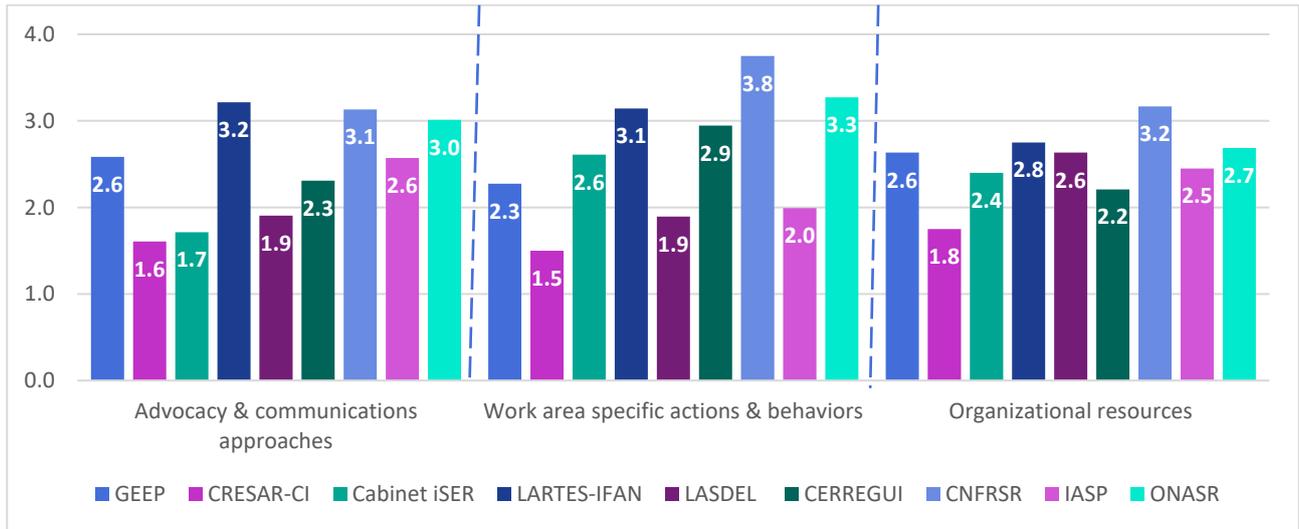
Figure 10: Institution-wise capacity assessment status across the three aspects of institutional capacity assessment

COMPONENT #1: ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS APPROACHES

Figure 11 shows how institutions rated themselves in the first advocacy and communications area. In general, institutions rated themselves differently across the sub-components, from performing "moderately well" to "well" to "excelling." From left to right, institutions scored themselves as being between 1 (poorly) to 3 (well) in the strategy to execute advocacy and communications effectively sub-category. A few institutions also ranked themselves as particularly high under the partner engagement sub-category (score max = 3.8). In general, institutions ranked themselves lowest in the "learning" category (score min = 1.0).
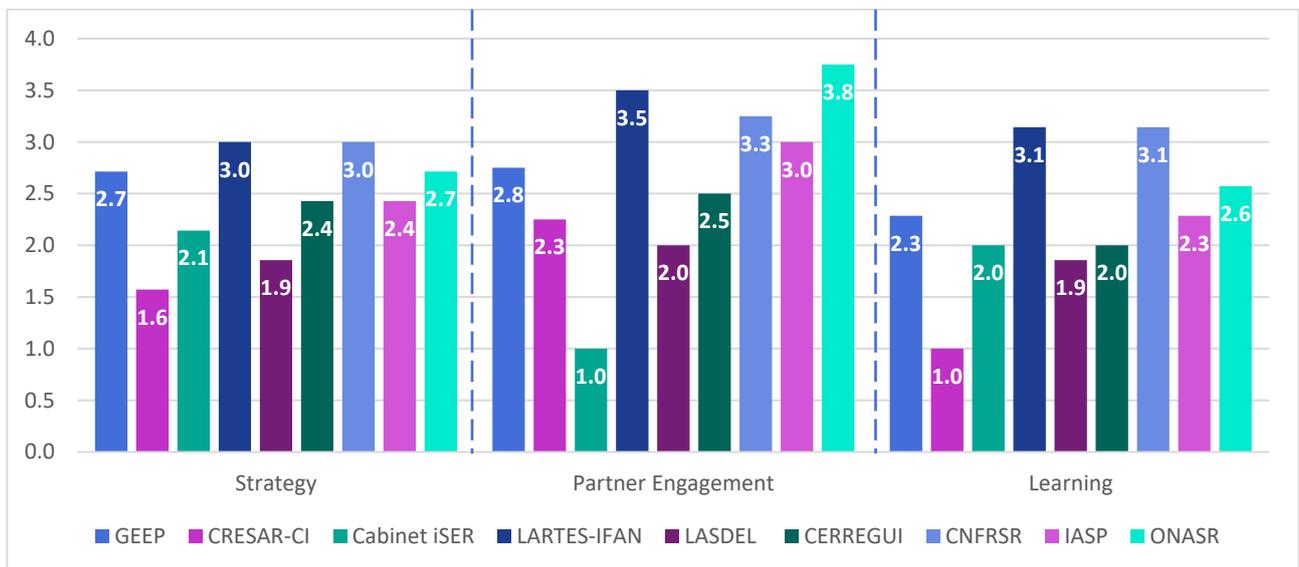
Figure 11: Institution-wise status of advocacy and communications approaches

COMPONENT #2: WORK AREA SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Figure 12[3] highlights the first three sub-components of **work area specific actions and behaviors**: 1) developing policy, 2) monitoring policy, and 3) supporting implementation. Monitoring policy is by far the weakest sub-component across all 10 institutions. This essentially means that institutions perceive themselves as having inadequate systems to track a policy, budget allocation on a policy, and identify opportunities. As seen in the previous section, developing policy has an overall low score of 2.8.
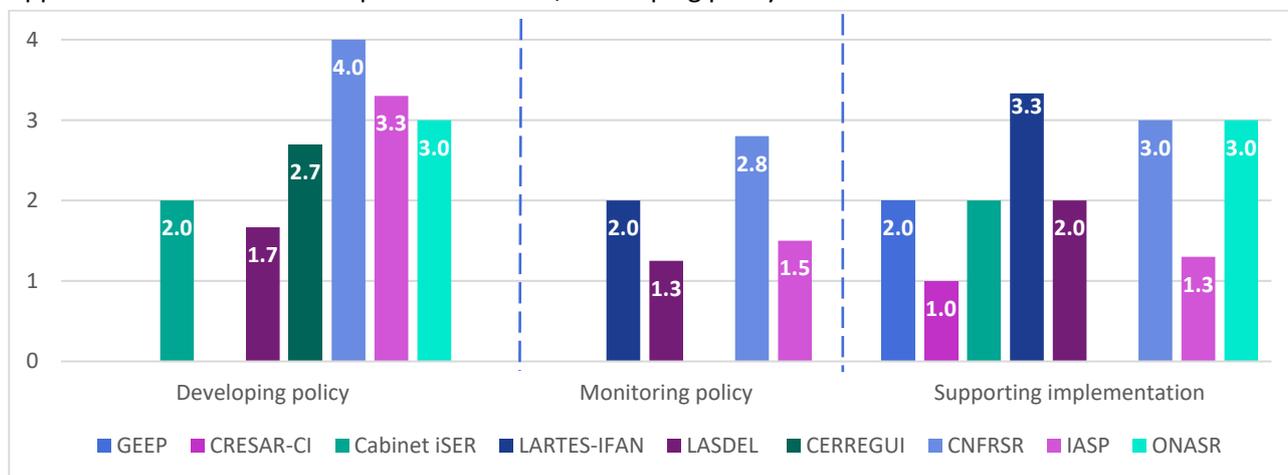
Figure 12: Institution-wise status of developing policy, monitoring policy and supporting implementation

Figure 13[4] highlights the next set of sub-components under work area specific actions and behaviors:

● engaging civil society leaders
● engaging elected officials
● engaging communities
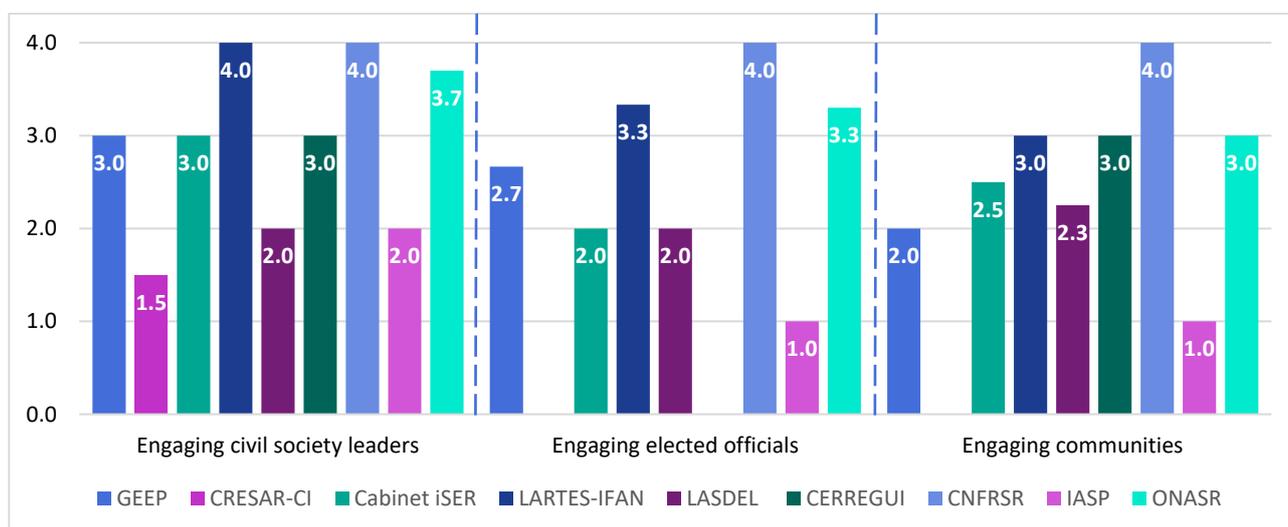
Figure 13: Institution-wise status of engaging civil society leaders, elected officials and communities

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[3] Missing institutions in the graphs imply that the specific work area actions and behaviors are not a part of the organization.

[4] Ibid

Figure 14[5] shows the average scores across the grantee institutions for the remaining three key sub-components of work area specific actions and behaviors—developing messages, disseminating messages, and using data to make the case.
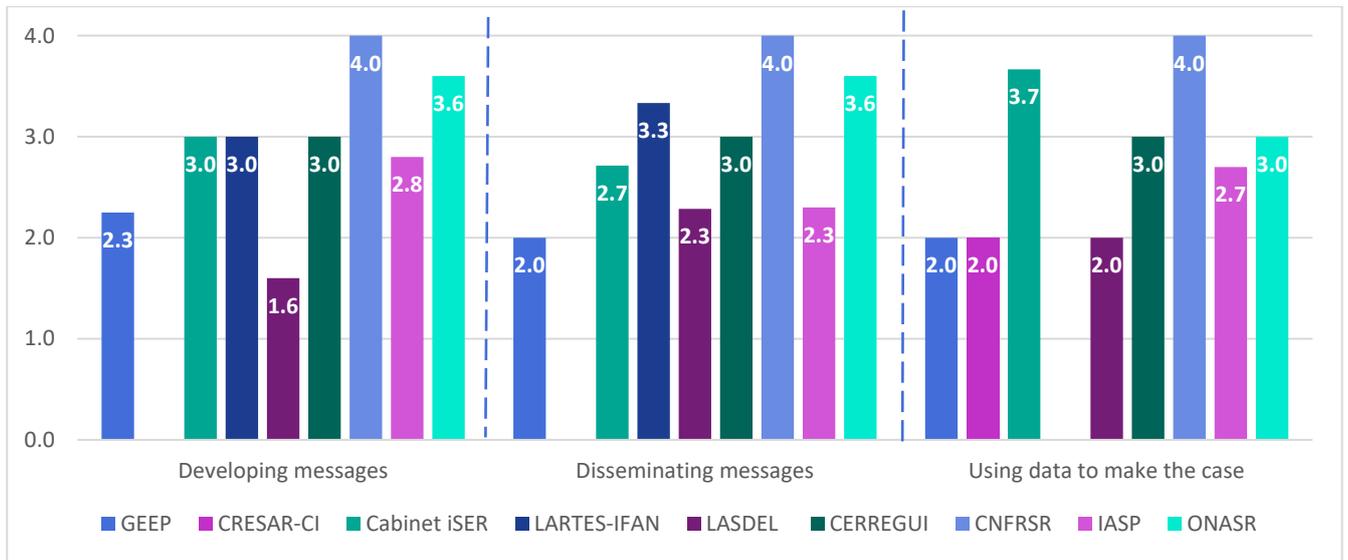
Figure 14: Institution-wise status of developing messages, disseminating messages and using data to make the case

COMPONENT #3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES
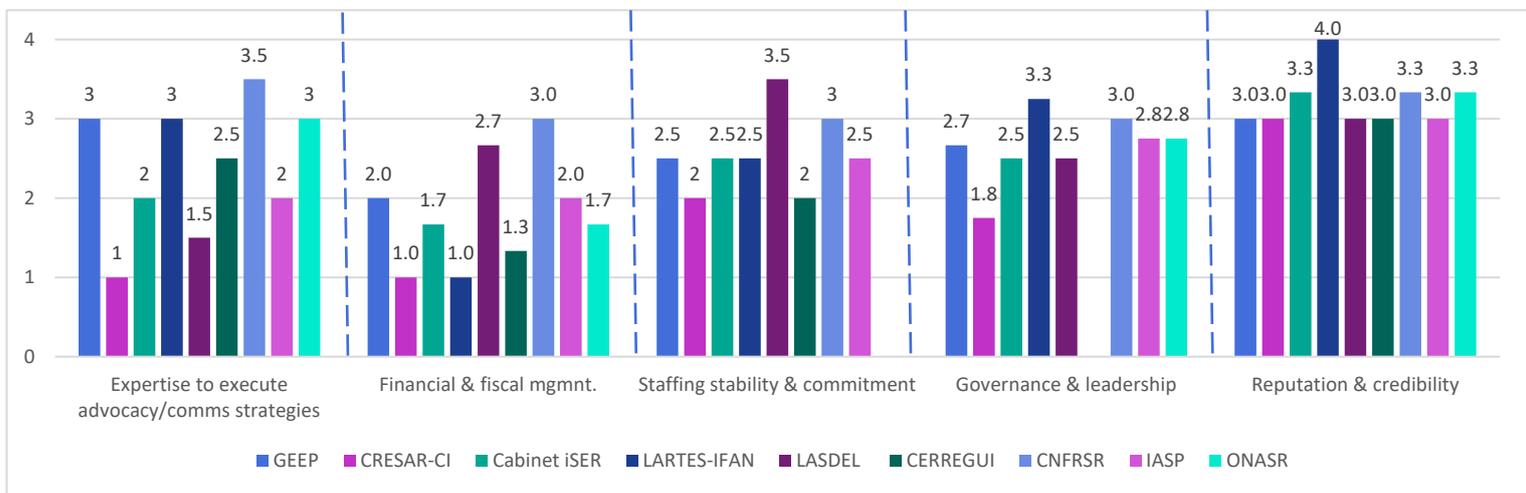
Figure 15: Institution-wise status of institutional resources used by institutions for an effective communications and advocacy strategy

Figure 15 presents the sub-components of the institutional resources area. Overall, executing advocacy and communications strategies appears to be a challenge for all institutions. Almost all institutions rated themselves with low average scores in the financial and fiscal management and governance and leadership categories. On the other hand, all institutions rated themselves as performing "well" to "excelling" in their reputation and credibility.

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[5] Missing institutions in the graphs imply that the specific work area actions and behaviors is not a part of the organization.

INSTITUTIONAL VISION AND AREAS OF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

This section explores aspects of the institution's vision as articulated by the senior leader during qualitative in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews with institutions' leadership sought their perspectives on the following topics:

- Overall vision and current or future position of the institution in the evidence and policy landscape
- Major gains the institution has achieved in the past three years in research, advocacy, and policy influence.
- The institution's capacity to achieve the vision in the policy advocacy landscape.
- Capacity gaps in scaling up research projects.
- Top priority needs that must be addressed by institutional capacity strengthening.

In our analysis, the above five themes were merged into two broad themes, presented below:

1. Vision or aspirations of the institution in the evidence and policy landscape
2. Institutions' capacity challenges and priority areas

THEME 1: VISION OF THE INSTITUTION WITH RESPECT TO ITS POSITION IN THE EVIDENCE AND POLICY LANDSCAPE

Understanding leadership perspectives about an institution's position within the larger policy and advocacy landscape was an important component of the in-depth interviews. Three key themes that emerged during interviews with institution leadership included: 1) aspirations to become a "go-to" institution that could generate evidence for decision-makers; 2) the existence of already established partnerships and collaboration with government ministries and policymakers, and; 3) the important ways in which research and evidence utilization drove the mission and activities of institutions.

Aspirations to become a "go-to" institution that can generate evidence for decision-makers: Leadership from grantee institutions interviewed for this baseline capacity assessment commonly aspired to have their respective institutions become the "go-to" institution for decision makers on key policy issues. For example, one leader shared the following about their "dream" to become a credible institution:

> "*We dream to become a professional institution of quality in monitoring evaluation and research which contributes to generating knowledge for the public and all actors considered as users of evidence in policy and socio-economic and development areas. In the health area, we want to be the reference institution in research, family planning in Togo. We are on a good track because we have a connection with the directorate of maternal and child health programs at the Ministry of Health. In the long term, we want to be a key player in all family planning research.*" –**Leader, Togo**

According to leaders, this goal should be achieved by providing quality evidence to policy stakeholders to make decisions backed by evidence. Consistent with the quote above, almost all grantee institutions were of the view that they are on the right track to achieve this goal. The approaches to engaging decision makers varied from institution to institution: whereas some were doing so vis-a-vis policy research, others were contributing by supporting key ministries with technical expertise.

At the same time, the interviews reflected institutions' acknowledgement of their capacity gaps in becoming the "go-to" institutions in their respective contexts. To propel institutions on a higher and more reputable trajectory, critical institutional and individual capacity gaps still needed to be addressed, including strategic communication and advocacy, fundraising, grant management, and the ability to use data for advocacy and knowledge transfer.

The existence of already established partnerships and collaboration with government ministries and policymakers: Almost all grantee institutions already work closely with government ministries and departments by sharing evidence generated through their research. According to the interviewed leadership, the government is a pivotal partner that can help ensure that their research and evidence is used by external audiences. While speaking about work with government ministries, one institutional leader in Senegal shared the diverse ways in which her institution collaborates with the Ministry of National Education:

> "*In Senegal, we are present throughout the country. Our work consists of the innovation of pedagogical information materials in the education sector; and we do a lot of research in the areas of reproductive health, the environment, and everything related to population and sustainable development. What is very interesting in the field of research is that we are trying to see how we can further influence the reforms related to the different curricula in the different programs in Senegal. In terms of influence, we are in direct partnership with the Ministry of Education. We have signed a protocol with the Ministry of National Education to contribute to innovative reforms in the education sector. We contribute a lot to innovations and the development of evidence at the [national] level of Senegal. In the field of research on pregnancies in schools, we make our contribution through research to show the cases of pregnancy, the distribution, and the consequences in adolescents. It is a good contribution in relation to teaching and learning strategies, the whole pedagogical component, the didactic component concerning adolescents and young people.*" —**Leader, Senegal**

The ways in which research and evidence utilization drive the mission and activities of institutions: For all interviewed leadership, influencing policy outcomes using evidence and research has been at the core of their institutions. This aspect drives them to attain their vision of becoming an institution of prominence in the evidence and policy landscape. Working with ministries and government departments gives them an opportunity to increase their influence on decision-makers and broader audiences. For example, one institution leader further emphasizes this point below:

> "*We always put ourselves in the shoes of whoever is going to use these data, whether it's governments, NGOs, partners, associations, civil society, communities. We always want the data to be used to accompany the action. And it's in a diversity of fields, in education, RH, social protection, 'social and solidarity economy.' Currently, there is ongoing training with actors from the Ministry of Social and Solidarity Economy to support them in working better with social enterprises in Senegal. We can be pioneers in this field because we invest a lot of time in the use of evidence. We are in the business of valorization through the management of knowledge for the benefit of public authorities, NGOs and communities in all the themes we address.*" —**Leader, Senegal**

THEME 2: INSTITUTIONS' CAPACITY CHALLENGES AND PRIORITY AREAS

This section categorizes different institutions' capacity challenges and priorities based on in-depth interviews with institutional leadership. As shown in **Figure 16**, we organized perceived challenges according to the four components of our capacity strengthening framework: 1) institutional business development and management; 2) managing partnerships; 3) core research skills, and 4) research communication and utilization.

Institutional business development & management	Managing partnerships	Core research skills	Research communication & utilization
•Resource mobilization •Fundraising •Staff stability •Grant management	•Building/managing partnerships with funders •Networking skills •Presence & visibility in right networks •Support for participation in international conferences •Regional & thematic-areas based network building	•Scaling up theories •Ability to write, publish articles & policy briefs •Translating research into knowledge products for dissemination •Training & access to statistical packages for research	•Advocacy skills to influence policy & showcase evidence •Using data for advocacy •Communication strategy

Figure 16: Capacity challenges that emerged from the in-depth interviews with the institution leadership

Institutional business development and management: Almost all leaders who participated in the in-depth interviews agreed that developing capacities in fundraising, resource mobilization, and grant management were extremely important for their institutions. For many interviewed leaders, there were strong links between the robust financial health of the institution and their staff stability. The capacity to raise funds was also important to dedicate resources for a robust advocacy and strategic communication plan. For example, one of the senior leaders shared the following during his interview:

> "*Strengthening capacity in partner search, fundraising, and in partnership development and grant management are priority needs in terms of institutional capacity strengthening. If we can get these skills reinforced first, then it would help us.*" –**Leader, Togo**

Another leader added that strengthening capacities in resource mobilization would inevitably complement her current capacities and work. However, she was of the view that resource mobilization activities should not be part of researchers' individual responsibilities; rather, separate human resources should be established and used to mobilize external funds and resources:

> "*There is a need for people in charge of mobilizing financial resources to have the necessary capacities. We don't have people dedicated to resource mobilization. This is the responsibility of every researcher at the institution. Training on financial resource mobilization is useful. However, the researcher does not have enough time to mobilize resources, then conduct the research, and then disseminate them. Resource mobilization*

is a separate profession, and the researcher is not the right person to do so."
—**Leader, Senegal**

Managing partnerships: The grantee institutions work with a wide variety of stakeholders, ranging from governments to universities, funders, networks, research institutions, and communities, among others. Thus, partnership management emerged as a key capacity strengthening requirement during interviews with leadership. According to leaders, strengthening partnership management skills could help them collaborate with potential funders and like-minded institutions and represent the work of their institution on the right platforms and networks. In an interview, one leader shared the following link between mobilizing partners and challenges to fundraising:

> *"The challenge is to strengthen our capacity to mobilize partners and sources of funding for research. We need to develop our partnership and management capacity to mobilize resources for research to achieve our vision."* –**Leader, Togo**

Core research skills: All interviewed leaders consistently shared that their most important capacity need encompassed the ability to translate evidence into actionable recommendations for decision makers and develop knowledge products for policy advocacy. Consistent with other participant perspectives, one interviewed leader specified the following challenge in translating evidence to action:

> "*Where we can do better is in influence and advocacy. We produce a lot of knowledge that decision-makers don't know. We need to make more effort to use and transform policies.*" –**Leader, Niger**

Research communication and utilization: Almost all institution leaders agreed that while their respective institutions are doing well in conducting research and working with the government, there is still a need to enhance institutional capacities to strengthen policy and advocacy efforts, including having institution-wide strategic communications plans. In the excerpt below, one leader contrasts her institution's strengths in research with their advocacy gaps and needs:

> "*In research, we are very good. However, in advocacy, we need capacity to have policy briefs out for research and strategic document development. We lack time to conduct knowledge transfer and advocacy of activities. We have contracted some time for advocacy, dissemination campaigns on social media, producing policy briefs, research articles. But it is difficult to own the findings and craft the correct messages for decision makers.*" –**Leader, Senegal**

Consistent with the needs expressed by the leader above, the following capacity needs emerged within the area of research communication and utilization across interviews:

- Improving documentation processes
- Writing policy briefs, articles, and other accessible materials related to their research
- Using data effectively for advocacy purposes
- Strengthening advocacy and communication efforts within specific thematic areas such as health and SRH

Individual Capacity Assessment

This section highlights the individual capacity of research personnel from the grantee institutions who participated in the self-evaluation survey. This section is divided into two parts. The first section covers the overall individual capacity assessment of the researchers, and the second section highlights the preferred capacity strengthening methods shared by researchers.

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The self-evaluation survey collected data to assess the individual capacity of the research staff within the 10 institutions. The survey asked the respondents to rate their ability to perform 14 critical functions as researchers, on a scale of 0 (No ability) to 7 (Excellent ability). **Figure 17** shows that the average scores of all 14 functions or competencies were slightly above 4 (Moderate ability).
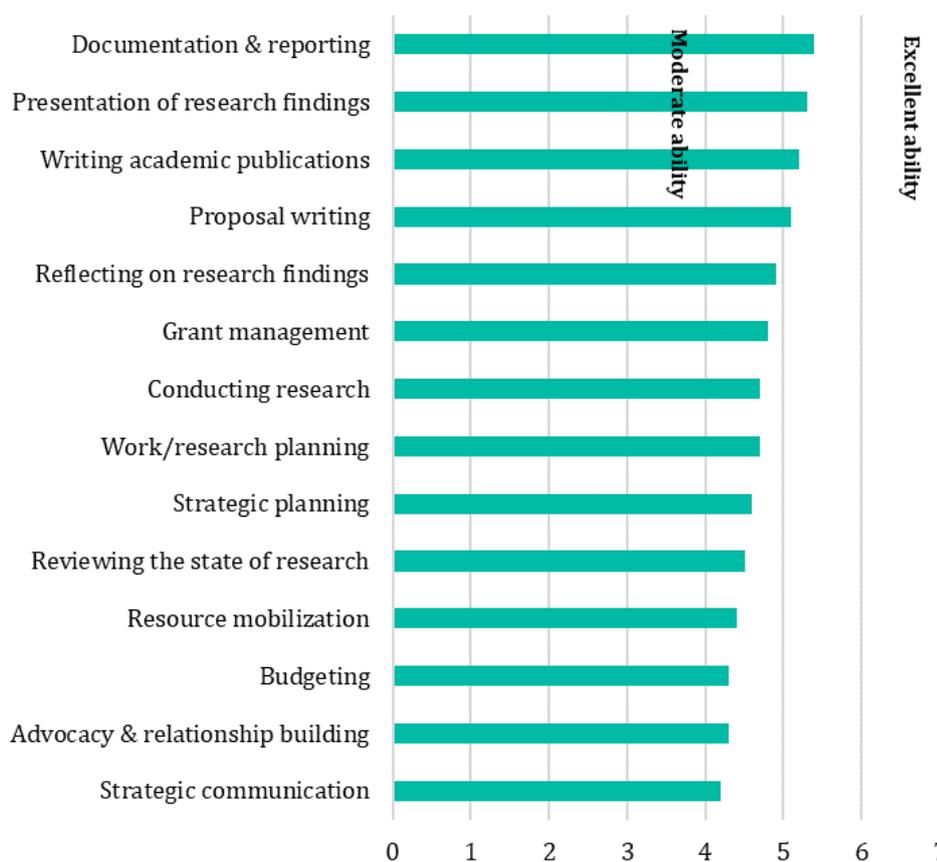
Figure 17: Average scores of overall individual capacity assessment

Participants rated themselves most highly on **documentation and reporting, presentation of research findings, writing academic publications and proposal writing** (scores > 5). The bottom four capacities had average scores of just above 4 (Moderate ability), including **strategic communication, advocacy and relationship building, budgeting,** and **resource mobilization**. These individual capacity gaps are broadly in line with the institutional capacity gaps with some variances. These variances occur because the self-evaluation surveys were administered to the research staff, whereas the institutional capacity assessment survey and in-depth interview were conducted among the senior leadership of the institution.

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING NEEDS

The self-evaluation survey also asked researchers across all departments and designations ranging from associate researchers to principal investigators about their perceived training needs that could make them more effective in their role. The emerging capacity strengthening needs of the research personnel are organized into the four themes[6] as shown in **Figure 18**. This was an important data point since many senior researchers in the grantee institutions have undertaken training in the areas of advocacy or communications, while the researchers at mid- or junior levels have undertaken trainings in technical areas.
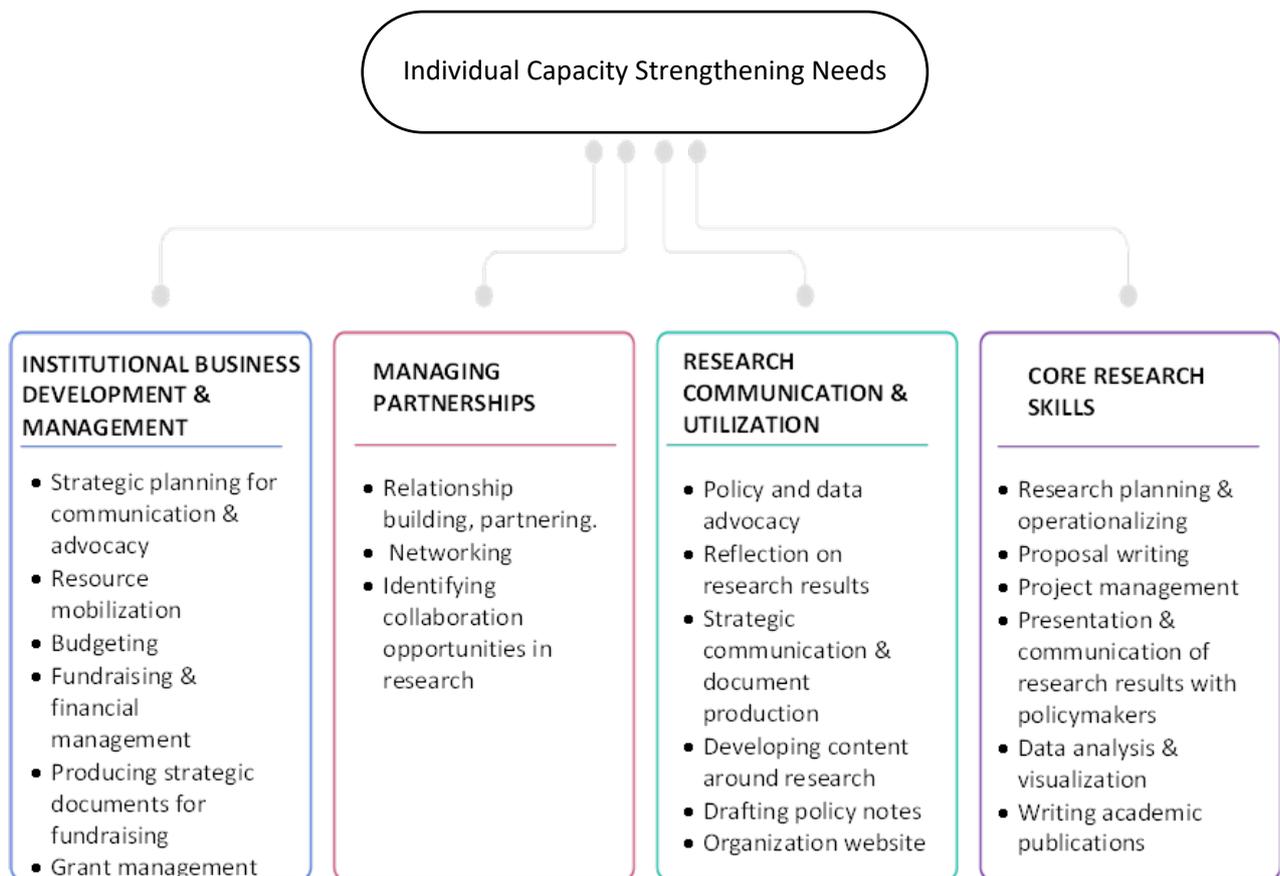
Figure 18: Overall individual capacity challenges and priority areas

Almost all researchers believed that strengthening these areas with a well-structured capacity strengthening initiative will strengthen their technical skills and allow them to manage their research projects effectively. For example, one of the researchers shared the following during data collection:

> "*The training opportunities listed above will allow us to improve our professional efficiency; to keep our technical skills up to date in a progressive manner; but also, to broaden our range of skills to improve performance in current and future daily missions. Finally, they will allow us to develop our communication skills, particularly in terms of research.*" –**Researcher, Senegal**

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[6] These four themes are the same ones mentioned in Institution's capacity challenges and priority areas in Section 2.1.4

The self-evaluation survey tool asked respondents about their individual capacity strengthening needs and capacity requirements for their institutions. Analysis of this data shows that they both align in areas of capacity strengthening both at the institutional and individual level. Some of the areas where both institutional and individual capacity needs are aligning are as follows:

- Mobilization of funds
- Strategic communications
- Presentation of research results and evidence
- Partnership management and networking
- Data analysis and advocacy
- Writing policy related documents such as policy briefs
- Grant management
- Developing and disseminating key policy related messages and research results

These common areas of capacity strengthening needs show that the aggregate of individual capacity needs is reflected on the overall institutional capacity needs.

PREFERRED CAPACITY STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES

The research personnel contacted for the self-evaluation survey submitted their preferred capacity strengthening methods based on their needs and institution's requirements. Overall, there was a unanimous perspective that the capacity strengthening activities should focus thematically on the following: 1) institutional business development and management; 2) managing partnerships; 3) research communication and utilization, and 4) core research skills. This assessment is consistent and in alignment with OPCU and Agency for All's capacity-strengthening framework and approach.

As well, the respondents shared the following capacity strengthening strategies which, according to them, would lead to an impactful capacity strengthening intervention:

- Trainings with practical and hands-on elements:
    - o Hands-on training allowing participants to connect the content with their research projects.
    - o Training that allows for group work, peer learning, and experience sharing.
- Capacity strengthening sessions at regular intervals to cover other staff members in addition to senior leadership.
- Coaching and mentoring as a part of the capacity strengthening strategy.
- Hybrid training opportunities that can cover other research staff in the institution.
- Regular updates on workshops, conferences, webinars, and networking events to be shared with participants.

LIMITATIONS

We experienced the following limitations during the baseline capacity assessment:

- The number of respondents who completed the self-evaluation survey was small (52). This limited our ability to obtain a comprehensive understanding of individuals' capacity assessment of their institution.

- The final analysis does not include the assessment data from all institutions since some institutions did not complete the surveys; however, during the co-creation workshop, all institutions contributed to exchanges on the challenges they face and made proposals on the interventions to be implemented.
- The institutional profile form and institutional capacity assessment survey often required the respondents to obtain data from other team members; in some cases, the person answering the surveys was not the best individual positioned to respond.
- Due to budget constraints and timelines, the assessment was not done in person.

CONCLUSION AND WAYS FORWARD

The baseline capacity assessment provided an in-depth understanding of the institutional and individual capacity gaps across the 10 grantee institutions.

Overall, the grantee institutions have key institutional strengths; in particular, institutions perceive themselves as being highly reputable and credible since members of the institutions' staff are contacted regularly by decision-makers, government, or civil society leaders as a source of information on policy issues. One of the key strengths of most of the grantee institutions is the fact that they work closely with government departments and ministries, thus giving them great opportunities to leverage their position for policy influence and advocacy.

With that said, the baseline assessment also highlighted key institutional and individual gaps that could be strengthened with the capacity strengthening activities planned for this project. Of note, we identified gaps in translating evidence into tangible and actionable recommendations for policymakers and policy implementation. More specifically, both at the institutional and individual level, the capacity gaps that emerged from the baseline assessment are in the areas of fundraising and resource mobilization, partner management, strategic communications, policy advocacy, and data usage to make compelling cases for the recommendations before the decision makers and developing products such as policy briefs which could be used for advocacy and dissemination.

- Grantee institutions and participants made important recommendations that will inform the design of the capacity strengthening activities, including the mode and frequency of learning events. While the institutions are doing well in core research skills, they need **capacity strengthening support in resource mobilization, strategic communication, and policy advocacy.**
- While designing capacity strengthening activities, **gaps identified by the institutions** (e.g., resource mobilization and fundraising, building and managing partnerships, advocacy skills to influence policy, communications strategy) and **researchers** (strategic planning for communication and advocacy, fundraising, relationship building, policy and data advocacy etc.) must be kept in mind.
- Training courses must be designed so that the participants get **hands-on experience** to apply the **learning in their day-to-day work.**
- **Coaching and mentoring support will be needed** to ensure comprehensive capacity enhancement.

While some of these capacity gaps are common across all grantee institutions, some capacity gaps varied, and some were institution specific. This implies that our capacity strengthening activities need to be adapted as per the institution's contexts and must be contextualized throughout the course of the capacity strengthening intervention. Agency for All is working on the Implementation Action Plan, which will reflect the needs and priorities of each grantee, and how trainings will be implemented, as well as the mentoring and training plan, which will detail our approach to selecting and supporting trainers and mentors. The baseline assessment highlighted capacity strengths, gaps, and recommendations from the grantee consortium, as well as from each grantee organization.

ANNEX 1

Tool 1: Institutional Profile Form

FOR COLLATING SECONDARY DATA ON THE INSTITUTION

1. Name of the institution:
2. Year of establishment:
3. Geographical presence:
4. Areas of work—Thematic:
5. Financial resource positions of the institution:

Particular	2021-22	2020-21	2019–20
Total Expenditure (USD)			
Research Expenditure (USD)			

6. Source of funds

Name of Funding Entity	Value (USD)		
	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20

7. Human resources

Particular	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
# Total Employees			
# Research Staff			

8. Human resources for research

Level	Number of Research Personnel		
	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Senior-level (PIs, research directors, etc.)			
Middle level (research managers, project coordinators, financial analysts, etc.)			
Junior level (research officers, associates, assistants, etc.)			
Senior-level (PIs, research directors, etc.)			

9. Affiliations/membership to national/regional level research institutions, associations, and networks

No.	Name of the research institutions, associations, and networks	Member since (year)

10. Does your institution have a board of directors? (Y/N)

11. How many members are there on the board of your institution?
    a) 1–5
    b) 6–10
    c) >10
    d) Not applicable

12. What is the gender profile of your institution's board?
    a) Male   _____
    b) Female _____
    c) Others   _____

    If others, specify _____

13. Dissemination of research

Dissemination events

Type	Number of Events		
	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Workshops			
Conferences			
Webinars			
Others (specify)			

Scientific publication (Last 3 years)

Title of Publication	Journal	Impact factor	Year	Authorship (lead/co-author)

Policy communication

Type	Presence and Visibility		
	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20
Policy briefs			
Opinion pieces on digital/ print media			
Presence on electronic media (panel discussions, expert interviews etc.)			
Social media campaigns			

Tool 2: Institutional Capacity Assessment Survey

FOR MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH LEADERSHIP TEAM

This survey is a crucial element of the capacity needs assessment of the institutions. The purpose of this survey is to assess the existing state of institutional priorities, efforts, and plans. The information will help the project intervention design and planning as per the institutional context and needs.

We are surveying heads of the research vertical/department/division of the participating institutions. The survey encourages a reflective process by the team of respondents on the state of their institution across research, policy advocacy, and communications to further identify gaps, if any. You are invited to take part in the study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The survey will take about 50–60 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers; we are only seeking answers to what you know based on your experience.

Risks/discomforts: Your participation in this study will be confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone apart from your own institution leaders who may have urged you to partake. We will take steps to make sure that your information is not shared with anyone else other than Agency for All, which will use the data for capacity assessment work.

Benefits and Payment/Compensation: You will not receive any monetary compensation or personal benefit by participating in this interview. You will not benefit directly from participating in this study. However, participation in this study can help Agency for All to better support your institution in designing and implementing effective capacity development plans to strengthen research practice institutionally, and in turn, generate quality evidence to advocate for critical public health issues in the region.

Confidentiality: We will maintain privacy and confidentiality. The information you share will be stored in a password-protected safe space accessible only to the researchers. It will never appear in a published report. Post data collection, Agency for All will ensure that the source of sensitive information/critical feedback is not traceable. Only de-identified data will be used for analysis and dissemination of findings. For the presentation purposes, individual responses that are relevant to the research will be used without disclosing the identity of the respondent.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is voluntary, meaning it is your decision whether to participate in this study or not. If you choose not to participate or want to stop at any time, there will be no consequences, we will respect the decision and there will not be any question asked.

Consent:

Do you consent to participate in the assessment?   Yes   No

Do you consent to spot checks?   Yes   No

Guide to successfully completing the survey:

1. The key respondents of the survey would be staff of the institution with the designation as or similar to *Principal Investigators, Leads, Domain Expert, Research Advisor*, etc.

2. The survey must be completed by a team of two to four members of the research leadership whose job responsibilities are the most relevant to research, advocacy, and policy communication as leaders. Selection of members is at the discretion of the institution.

3. The respondent team will select a single response on the scale for each question after due discussion leading to consensus.

4. The survey has three sections, namely:
   a) Advocacy and communication approaches
   b) Work-area specific actions and behaviors
   c) Institutional assets

   Note that because this survey is an adaptation of an existing tool, the respondents will have to consider contextualizing each question to their institution's specific research, advocacy, and policy communication areas of intervention.

5. The survey should be completed in one sitting to avoid any invariabilities; therefore, it is recommended that the team convenes the discussion on a single day conveniently ensuring everyone's active participation and contribution.

SECTION 1. ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS APPROACHES

Response choices for all scales in this section:					
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
We do this poorly	**We do this moderately well**		**We do this well**		**We excel at this**

	STRATEGY
How well does your institution	**Identify and document** clear policy priorities and goals
	Identify and develop clear advocacy and communications plans (strategies, actions, and tactics) to advance policy priorities and goals
	Document a plan or model that expresses the changes or results the organization believes will happen as a result of its advocacy and communications effort
	Quickly adjust (change or modify) tactics when needed
	Allocate sufficient budget and staff to engage in strong advocacy and communications efforts
	Adjust advocacy and communications resources (budget, staff) as opportunities or circumstances change
	Understand who are the key stakeholders are regarding specific policy or financing issues and decisions

	PARTNER ENGAGEMENT
How well does your institution	**Work** with other institutions or influential leaders to develop a joint agenda (shared goals), strategy, or action plan
	Form or lead groups or coalitions around a particular policy or financing decision, or implementation issue
	Participate in groups or coalitions when doing so would be helpful to advancing policy and financing goals
	Identify and work with people who can effectively speak with decisionmakers or advocate for an issue

	LEARNING
How well does your institution	**Analyze** or interpret data about the quality or effectiveness of advocacy and communications efforts
	Regularly reflect on advocacy and communications MLE data, document lessons about what's working and what's not, then apply learnings to current/future advocacy and communications work
	Involve staff at multiple levels (senior managers as well as program staff) in learning from advocacy and communications MLE data and applying lessons
	Share lessons from advocacy and communications MLE data with those from other institutions (for example, partners, coalitions or others working to advance policy or resource decisions or implementation
	Generate evidence regarding the effectiveness of advocacy and communications efforts
	Regularly reflect on and apply learnings from past or current policy- and financing-related efforts
	Monitor whether a policy or financing effort had the intended impact (and whether there were any unintended consequences)

SECTION 2. WORK AREA-SPECIFIC ACTIONS & BEHAVIORS (1/3)

Response choices for all scales in this section:						
1	2	3	4	5	6	0 (NA)
We do this poorly	We do this moderately well		We do this well		We excel at this	This area of work is not part of our advocacy and communications strategy

DEVELOPING POLICY

How well does your institution	**Develop** policy proposals and legislation informed by data or research
	Incorporate policy and/or analysis of government budgets into policy proposals
	Consider and represent the needs of community members affected by policy or financing decisions when developing policy proposals

MONITORING POLICY

How well does your institution	**Monitor** support <u>and</u> opposition to a policy proposal or financing decision
	Monitor decision makers' support or voting patterns regarding policy proposals or financing decisions
	Have a system to track the policy or political environment and identify where there are opportunities
	Track government budgets, including proposed budget commitments and actual expenditures

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

How well does your institution	**Leverage** relationships with government administrators to ensure policy implementation promotes positive outcomes (e.g., ensuring policy is adequately funded, has sufficient capacity to implement, with clear plans for execution)
	Leverage relationships with service providers to ensure policy implementation promotes positive outcomes (there is sufficient capacity to implement with clear plans for execution)
	Strive to ensure government leaders have access to technical knowledge to support successful policy implementation (for example, ensuring those in government have necessary technical knowledge or are in contact with knowledgeable experts)

SECTION 2. WORK AREA-SPECIFIC ACTIONS & BEHAVIORS (2/3)

ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY LEADERS

How well does your institution	**Identify** and build relationships with civil society leaders from a range of sectors: for example, faith and cultural leaders; leaders of networks, associations, or unions; business leaders; academics; those in the media
	Utilize a range of strategies to connect with civil society leaders, such as providing briefs or other educational materials; utilizing effective messengers; direct contact
	Educate civil society leaders about priority issues

ENGAGING ELECTED OFFICIALS

How well does your institution	**Identify** and build relationships with elected officials or leaders at multiple levels of government
	Make use of a range of strategies to connect with elected officials and government leaders (for example, providing briefs or other educational materials; utilizing effective messengers; direct contact)

	Educate elected officials and government leaders about priority issues and proposed solutions through forums, peer exchanges or other platforms
ENGAGING COMMUNITIES	
How well does your institution	**Listen to and build relationships** with the community members who are most directly affected by the issues to be addressed by policy or financing goals
	Educate and train affected community members about how they can effectively contribute to the advancement of policy or financing goals
	Mobilize and support affected community members to act toward a policy or resource goal (for example, speaking out at public forums)
	Engage with community members or affected populations to determine whether a policy or financing decision has been implemented
DEVELOPING MESSAGES	
How well does your institution	**Develop** clear, specific, and topical messages that address policy or financing goals
	Use accurate and compelling data when developing messages
	Test potential communications messages with target audiences and adapt them as needed
	Use different messages for different audiences
	Ensure your communications plan addresses policy and financing goal(s)
DISSEMINATING MESSAGES	
How well does your institution	**Maintain** good relationships and connections with strategically relevant media outlets
	Develop communications products that are targeted, such as educational brochures and infographics
	Utilize print media, such as newspapers, journals, newsletters in a compelling manner
	Utilize digital media, such as social media, podcasts, videos, infographics in a compelling manner
	Utilize broadcast media, such as TV and radio, in a compelling manner
	Maintain attention with relevant audience(s) or in relevant sector(s) by publishing materials, authoring articles, speaking to media or at forums or other events, etc.
	Routinely monitor the messages surrounding key issues, including both opposing and supporting messages

SECTION 2. WORK AREA-SPECIFIC ACTIONS & BEHAVIORS (3/3)

USING DATA TO MAKE THE CASE

How well does your institution	**Identify** what data is needed to make a compelling case to advance policy or financing goals, including where there are data gaps or data needs
	Know where to find quality data relevant to your organization's policy or financing goals
	Produce research- or data-informed products that are timely, meaning products are available at the right time to be most influential or useful

Not every institution implements every aspect of advocacy and communications work. Please indicate which scales: 1) are **part of your institution's core work,** AND 2) are **very important to your institution's ability to advance its goals**:
Note: Respondents must give scores, 1 or 2, as per the scales mentioned above against each advocacy and communications aspects below.

Developing Policy

Monitoring Policy

Supporting Implementation

Engaging with Civil Society Leaders

Engaging Elected Officials

Engaging Communities

Developing Messages

Disseminating Messages

Using Data to Make the Case

SECTION 3. INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES — 12 items

Response choices for all scales in this section:

Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE WITHIN STAFF TO EFFECTIVELY EXECUTE ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

My institutional team includes individuals who have sufficient training in and/or experience with advocacy work, such as those with experience doing policy interventions, those who are skillful at working with different types of stakeholders, and those who are proficient at use of data.
My institutional team includes individuals who have sufficient training in and/or experience with communications work, such as those with experience developing and disseminating messages.

FUNDING/FISCAL MANAGEMENT

My institutional has unrestricted funding— that which can be used for internal operations and administration, not just project funding
My institution's budget includes dedicated funds for advocacy and communications—that is, either grant funding that supports advocacy and communications or other funding that your institution allocates to advocacy and communications work
My institution has a stable funding situation—that is, the institution has significant long-term funding, a diverse set of funders

SECTION 3. INSTITUTIONAL ASSETS — 12 items

STAFFING STABILITY AND COMMITMENT

Advocacy and communications staffing has been stable for the past three years
Our institution's executive leadership has been stable for the past three years

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP
My institution's board regularly provides strategic guidance on policy or communications issues
My institution's board has a policy/communications committee that provides input on advocacy and communications approaches, tactics, or goals
My institution has a clear publicly available organogram
My institution has a strategic document guide

REPUTATION AND CREDIBILITY
My institution has a good reputation among community members, other advocacy institutions, and service-providers
My institution has a good reputation among decision makers, government and civil society leaders, and the media
Members of the institution's staff are contacted regularly by decision makers, government or civil society leaders, or the media as a source of information

Tool 3: In-Depth Interview Guide

FOR INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Good morning/afternoon. I am (Name of the Interviewer) from the Agency for All consortium, a group of institutions working in partnership with the OPCU. We are conducting a Capacity Needs Assessment for the institution. We would like to ask you some questions to assess the scope/areas of capacity development in research, advocacy, and policy communication related work in your institution. Your participation is completely voluntary.

The purpose of this interview is to understand the perceptions and vision the leadership has regarding research opportunities and scope to inform further training needs. I request you to kindly allow me to ask you a few questions.

Risks and Benefits: There is no risk in the assessment. You would be referenced in relation to a unique code. You will not benefit directly from participation in this study. We hope that the information we learn will help us to design better training programs to improve the performance of research institutions in West Africa. No photographs or video will be taken during these interviews. We will take all COVID-19 preventive measures for the interview.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this assessment is voluntary, and you are free to refuse to be observed or to participate. The duration of the interview will be around 30 minutes.

Confidentiality: This interview will be recorded for our research purposes. Your answers will be kept completely confidential and will be used for research purposes only. You do not have to answer questions that you do not want to answer. You may decide to stop being a part of the assessment at any time without explanation. However, we seek your cooperation in providing complete information. If you don't want this interview to be recorded, then the interview team can take detailed notes of the conversation. If backchecks or follow-up calls are required, consent will be taken again. The backchecks will be conducted

by the same person or another person who is a representative of Sambodhi and EVIHDAF (with required identification).

Compensation: You will not be given any compensation for participating in this assessment. At this time, do you have any questions that you would like to ask me about this observation?

Details of the respondent:

Name of the respondent:

Institution:

Designation:

How long have you been working in the institution:

Sex (Please tick):   ○ Male   ○ Female   ○ Transgender

Date of interview: __/__/____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

I. How do you currently position or like to position your institution in the evidence and policy landscape? *(Probe for research goals or vision or priority areas, types of associations/partnerships for collaboration, key problem areas in the region or policy space that the institution may want to work on.)*

II. In terms of research, advocacy, and policy influence, where do you feel your institution has made the most gains in the last three years? *(Probe for examples of how the institution has currently been influencing policy through research or probe for impact of evidence generated in policymaking, engagement with policymakers, publications, seminars, or conferences organized for policy influence, partnerships etc.)*

III. What according to you is your institution's capacity to attain the vision across research, advocacy, and policy influence? *(Probe for comments on infrastructure, staff competencies, research leadership's vision alignment, funding etc.)*

IV. Within your ongoing or upcoming projects, what are your hopes and expectations for your contribution to sustaining and scaling the programs or interventions that your research relates to? *(Probes: What is your role in different areas of scale up practice for this project? These include: designing interventions for scale; conducting pilot research to guide scale-up planning and implementation; and/or monitoring or evaluating scale up efforts? What frameworks/approaches do you use, if any, to guide your work on scale-up and sustainability? Have your staff received an orientation or training on scale-up theory or practice? What has been your institution's experience in adapting and scaling programs/initiatives, and how does your experience or approach(es) relate to or align with your expectations for this project?)*

V.   What challenges do you foresee (if any) in scaling and sustaining this intervention?

VI.   What type of institutional capacity strengthening might be helpful to complement and build on your institution's engagement in issues related to scale and sustainability? *(Probes: Are there certain topics, activities or resources you'd like to see integrated into your institution's capacity strengthening plan that would be useful in developing and carrying out a scale-up strategy?)*

VII.   In what areas could your institution most improve its research and advocacy work? What investments have been made by the institution in the past to address the same? *(Probe for challenges in attaining set goals or vision, what could be achieved and what could not be achieved, factors behind setbacks etc.)*

VIII. What according to you would be the top three to five priority needs to be redressed via institutional capacity strengthening immediately? *(Probe for methods or ways of redressal of factors that may have been articulated in the previous question by asking: "How are you thinking of redressing the [factors behind setbacks] that may help your institution reach its set goals and vision? What would be the key areas of intervention?")*

IX.   Anything else that you would like to share?

Tool 4: Research Competency Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

FOR ALL RESEARCH PERSONNEL IN THE INSTITUTION—ALL LEVELS

This survey is a crucial part of the capacity need assessment of the institutions. Its purpose is to assess the perceived training needs and competencies of the research staff of the institution. The information will help the project intervention design and planning as per the institutional context and needs.

Procedures: We are surveying the research staff across the institution. Their perceived needs and competencies will help identify the gaps, if any, in designing, planning, conducting, and disseminating research. You are invited to take part in the study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The survey will take about 15 to 20 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers; we are only seeking answers to what you know based on personal views.

Risks/discomforts: Your participation in this study will be confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone. We will take steps to make sure that your information is not shared with anyone.

Benefits and payment/ compensation: You will not receive any monetary compensation or personal benefit by participating in this interview. You will not benefit directly from participating in this study. However, participation in this study can help Agency for All better support your institution in designing and

implementing effective capacity development plans to strengthen research practice institutionally and in turn generate quality evidence to advocate for critical public health issues in the region.

Confidentiality: We will maintain privacy and confidentiality. The information you share will be stored in a password-protected safe space which is accessible only to the researchers and will never appear in any sort of report that might be published. Post data collection, Agency for All will ensure that the source of sensitive information/critical feedback is not traced back. Only de-identified data will be used for analysis and dissemination of findings. For presentation purposes, individual responses that are relevant to the research will remain anonymous.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is voluntary, meaning it is your decision to participate in this study or not. If you choose not to participate or want to stop at any time, there will be no consequences; we will respect your decision and no questions will be asked.

If you want to talk to anyone about this study or have any questions about it, you may email your concerns and questions to rajib.nandi@sambodhi.co.in.

For any ethical issues: (leave this blank for now)

Contact Information:

Consent:

Do you consent to participate in the research?   **Yes**   **No**

Do you consent to spot checks?   **Yes**   **No**

     I.   Name of the respondent:
     II.   Name of the institution:
     III.   Department/Vertical/Division:
     IV.   Designation:
     V.   Duration in the current institution:
     VI.   Highest level of education:
           a. Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)
           b. Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)
           c. Professional degree beyond bachelor's degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
           d. Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)
     VII. Overall work experience (in years):
     VIII. Job Role:

Please mention your key responsibilities in the space given below in brief (1000 characters)**.**

With respect to the job role described in the previous section, please select the activities that most accurately represent the functions you perform (select all that apply)
- Strategic planning
- Proposal writing
- Resource mobilization/fund-raising

- Advocacy and relationship strengthening/partnerships
- Strategic Communications
- Budgeting
- Work/research planning
- Grant management
- Documentation and reporting
- Reviewing literature
- Conducting research (design, data collection, analysis)
- Drawing insights/reflecting on research findings
- Writing academic publications
- Presentation of research findings

In the following sections, for each of the items, please indicate your perception of ability in the respective areas on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 having no ability and 7 having excellent ability to perform the skill.

```
 None                  Average              Excellent
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
```

(Note: In the digital form, indicators of only the selected identifiers, as mentioned above, would be accessible for the respondents to rate)

No.	Constructs	Items
1	Strategic Planning	- I am able to define the aim and broad outcomes of the research project (__) - I am able to identify the relevance/position of the research project in the larger intervention landscape of the particular domain (__) - I am able to identify funding institutions and/or schemes that may be interested in the outcomes of the research (__) - I can outline the rules and requisites (such as the funding policy, eligibility criteria etc.) of target funding agencies/schemes for the research (__) - I know how to locate a supportive environment for the research topic to assess collaboration and/or funding opportunities (__)
2	Proposal Writing	- I can write a proposal statement that is clear, concise, and well-presented (__) - I am able to clearly communicate the organization of the project and its major components from my proposal (__) - I know how to write a proposal that includes a clear expression of questions, hypotheses, and outcomes, which can be called the scientific justification of the research (__)
3	Resource Mobilization	- I know how to landscape potential funding agencies and/or schemes for a research topic (__) - I am able to approach multiple funding institutions and instead depend solely on one or two to discuss scope of research funding (__) - I am able to mention a detailed budget component either in the proposal submitted or as a separate component to funding agencies (__)
4	Advocacy and Relationship Building	I am able to identify the relevant stakeholders to lobby for the research objectives (__)

		• I confidently lobby with policymakers to effectuate the research objectives (__) • I am able to identify and collaborate with other professionals who are involved in the domain of the research project for wider dissemination (__) • I can identify opportunities of collaboration in the research as well as non-academic space for wider dissemination (__) • I write about the research objectives and its outcomes on mainstream media for wider outreach and influence (__) • I feel confident in organizing workshops and/or consultations with relevant stakeholders to facilitate discourse on the research topic (__)
5	Strategic Communications	• I am able to conduct necessary analysis to assess the appropriate communication methodology (including but not limited to identifying stakeholders concerned, means, and avenues of communication) for my research project/organization (__) • I can confidently conduct necessary analysis (e.g., demographic analysis) to identify the target audience for my research project (__) • I know how to design a comprehensive communication plan (including but not limited to objectives, audience, methodology, operations, and evaluation) for my research project/organization (__)
6	Budgeting	• I am able to identify or map the various resources required and available for the research project (__) • I can calculate costs and rates for the mapped resources (__) • I know how to clearly justify reasons for the costs mapped under budget per resource (__) • I read and understand the funding policy of an agency or scheme to determine budget requisites before submitting a proposal (__)
7	Work/Research Planning	• I can clearly define the aim and outcomes of the research project (__) • I am able to identify or map the various resources required for the research project (__) • I am able to identify sources for the various resources required for the research project (__) • I am able to define a realistic and clear timeline for the research project (__) • I can confidently depict the project timeline using visualization tools such as Gantt charts, etc. (__) • I can confidently design a planning framework for a multi-strand research project to simplify tasks/activities (__)
8	Grant Management	• I am able to conduct budgetary analysis in a periodic manner to carefully monitor grant usage (__) • I know how to devise a data maintenance and recordkeeping strategy for tracking all expenses related to my research grant (__) • I am able to communicate the progress on the project with the investors/funding agency in a timely manner for review and feedback (__) • I can easily design a framework mapping the research project goal, outcomes, implementation plan, challenges etc. (__)

		● I am able to monitor and review project progress with respect to a framework delineating research project goal, outcomes, implementation plan, challenges, etc. (__)
9	Documentation and Reporting	● I am able to archive data systematically and periodically throughout the research project to maintain proper hygiene in data management (__) ● I find intermediate or periodic reporting helpful in communicating progress and challenges of the project to the investor/funding agency (__) ● I can confidently draft high-quality reports of the research project to satisfy donor requisites (__) ● I find it easy to stick to reporting timelines and periodicity set mutually with the funding agency/investors (__)
10	Reviewing the State of Research	● I know how to conduct a targeted search of the state of research on a specific topic (__) ● I know where to target a search of the state of research on a specific topic (__) ● I am able to systematically review the state of research on a specific topic (__) ● Based on the state of research, I am able to identify gaps/unaddressed questions for further research (__) ● I can evaluate the methodological quality of researched findings well (__)
11	Conducting Research	● I can clearly formulate specific research questions/hypotheses (__) ● I am able to decide which data/sources/materials I need to address my research question (__) ● I am able to plan a research process (__) ● I can confidently operationalize each step of the research process (__) ● I find it easy to decide which methods I need to use to examine a specific research topic (__) ● I am good at judging which method is inappropriate to answer a specific research question (__) ● I can apply different research methods appropriate to my research question (__) ● I can confidently analyze quantitative data (__) ● I can confidently analyze qualitative data (__) ● I can confidently use a variety of methods for analyzing data (MS Excel, specialized software, etc.) (__) ● I can confidently use a variety of software for data visualization (RStudio, Tableau, Flourish, etc.) (__)
12	Reflecting on Research Findings	● I am able to adequately interpret my research findings. (__) ● I am able to adequately relate my research findings to key theories in the subject area (__) ● I am able to critically reflect on methodological limitations of my own research findings (__) ● I am able to reflect on the implications of my own research findings in my discipline (__) ● I am able to discuss my research findings with regard to their potential applications (__) ● I am able to critically reflect on the social and ethical implications of my research (__)

		● I am able to take a stand on social and ethical issues of research in my discipline (__)
13	Writing Academic Publications	● I can write up research findings in accordance with the current conventions in my discipline (__) ● I am able to write a publication in accordance with the standards of my discipline (__) ● I can write a report that meets the standards of academic writing (__)
14	Presentation of Research Findings	● I am able to prepare research findings for a presentation at a research colloquium (__) ● I am able to present my research at a scientific meeting in accordance with current standards in my discipline (__)

a) What in your opinion are the areas in which you need training to be more effective in your job role? Please indicate three training areas you perceive as the most needed.

b) How do you think these training opportunities would enable you to grow into another role/level within your institution?

c) Have you personally participated in capacity strengthening or professional development efforts in the areas of advocacy and/or communications in the past three years, such as training, conferences, mentoring programs, peer-to-peer exchange programs, trainings? If so, please provide a brief description.

d) Regarding training or professional development in the areas of advocacy or communications that you personally have participated in, what has been most useful to you and how?

e) In terms of advocacy and communications skills or effectiveness, where do you think you or your institution has made the most gains in the past three years?

f) Thinking about the previous sections of the survey, in what areas do you think your institution could most improve its advocacy and communications work

ANNEX 2

This section includes individual graphs of every sub-component and related sub-elements for the three aspects of institutional capacity assessment.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS APPROACHES

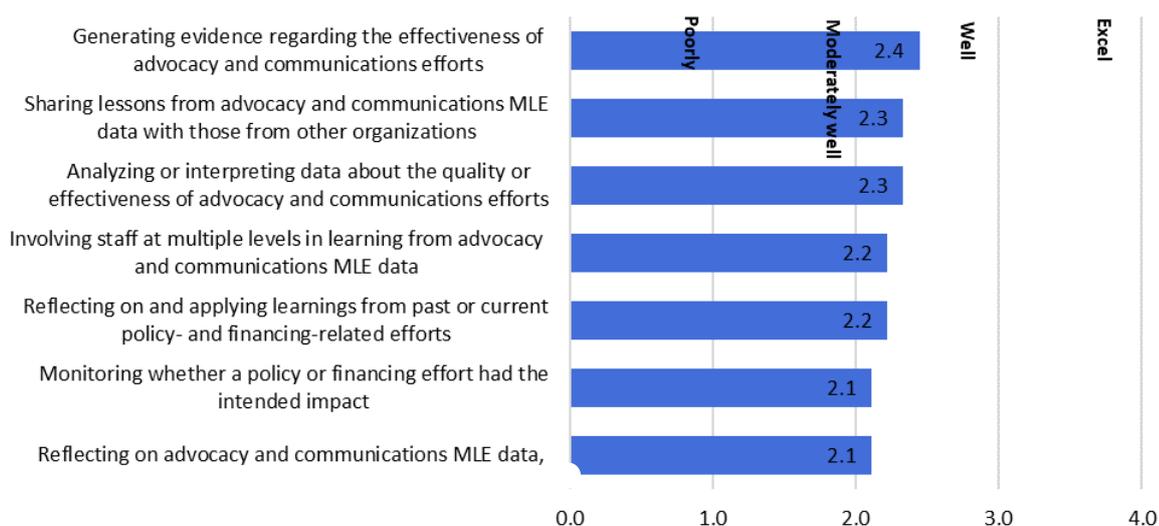### Learning

Advocacy & communications approaches > Learning

Figure 19: Average scores for the learning sub-component within advocacy & communications approaches section

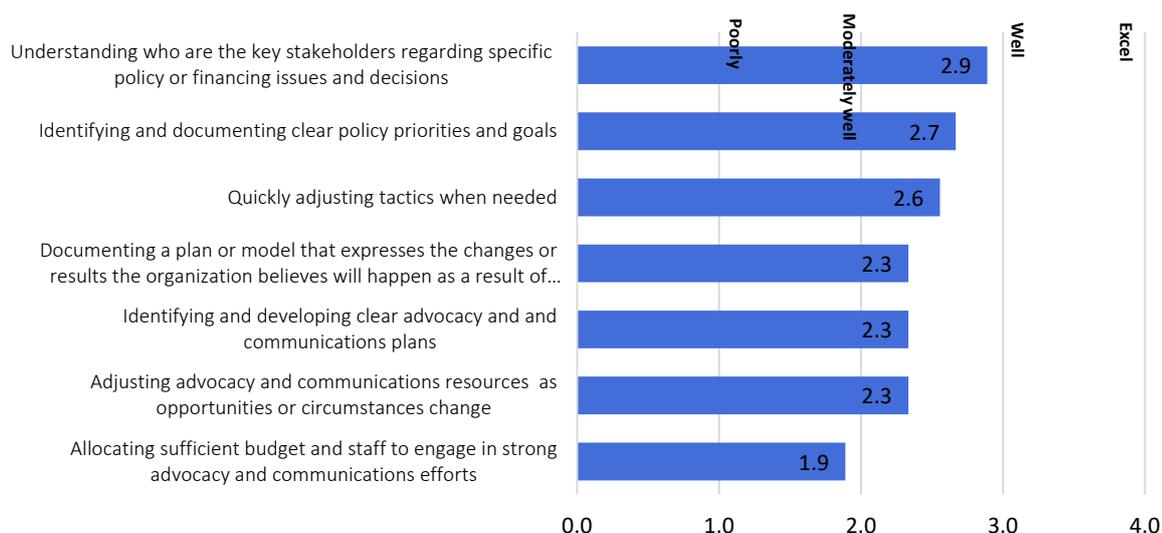### Strategy

Advocacy & communications approaches > Strategy

Figure 20: Average scores for the strategy sub-component within advocacy and communications approaches section

Partner engagement

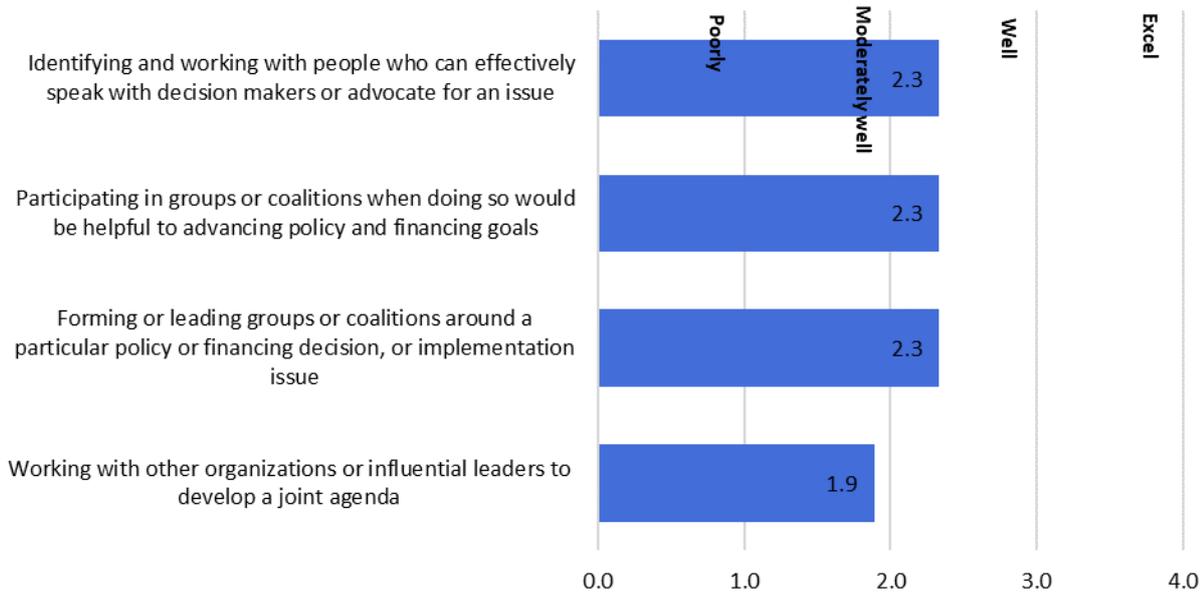**Advocacy & communications approaches > Partner engagement**

Figure 21: Average scores for the partner engagement sub-component within advocacy and communications approaches section

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Funding & fiscal management

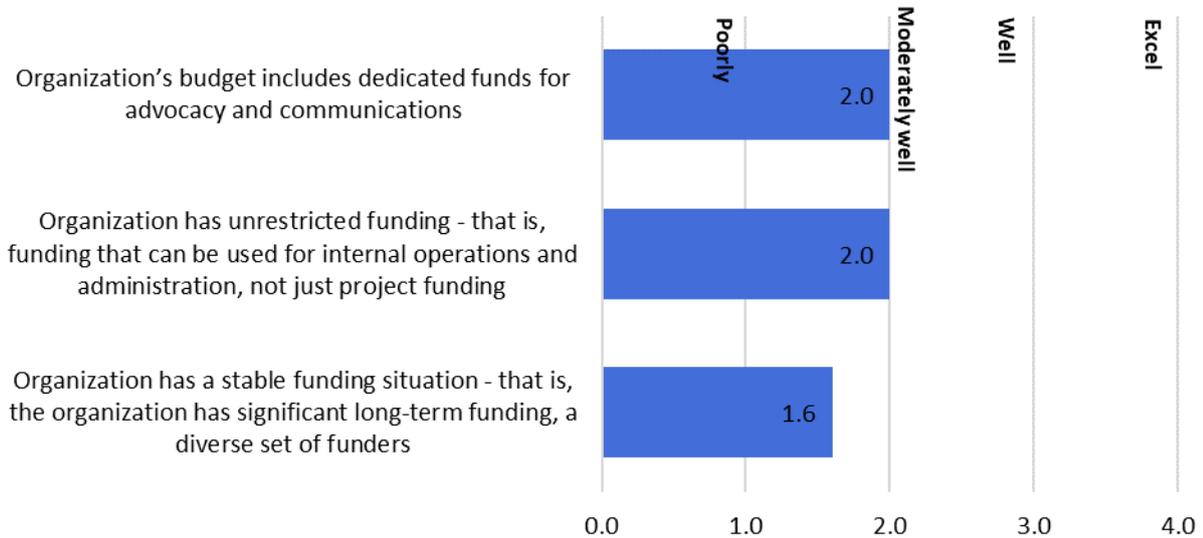**Organizational resources > Funding and fiscal management**

Figure 22: Average scores for the funding and financial sub-component within institutional resources section

Experience and expertise to effectively execute advocacy and communications strategies

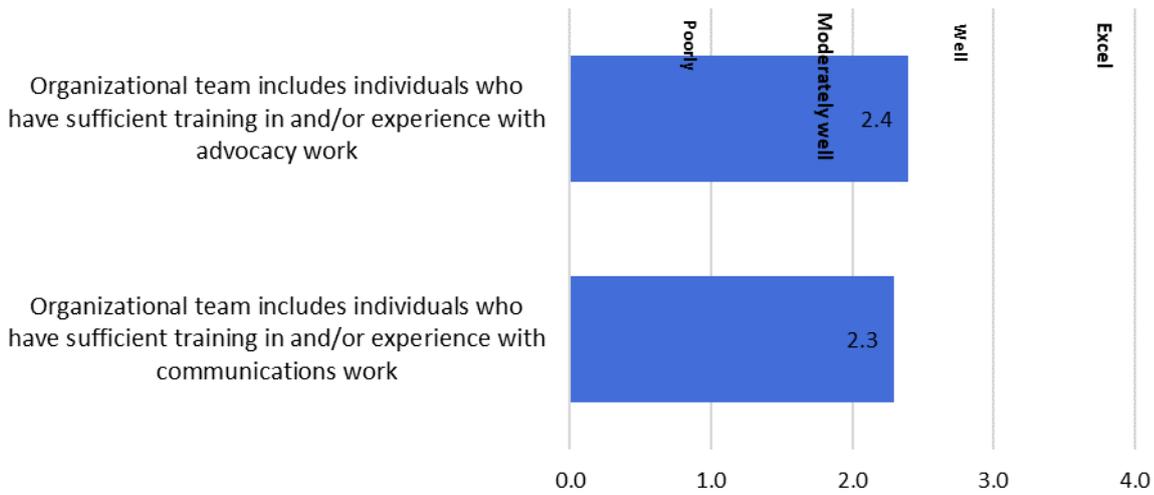**Organizational resources > Experience to effectively execute advocacy & communications strategies**

Figure 23: *Average scores for the expertise in effectively executing advocacy strategies sub-component within institutional resources section*

Staff stability and commitment

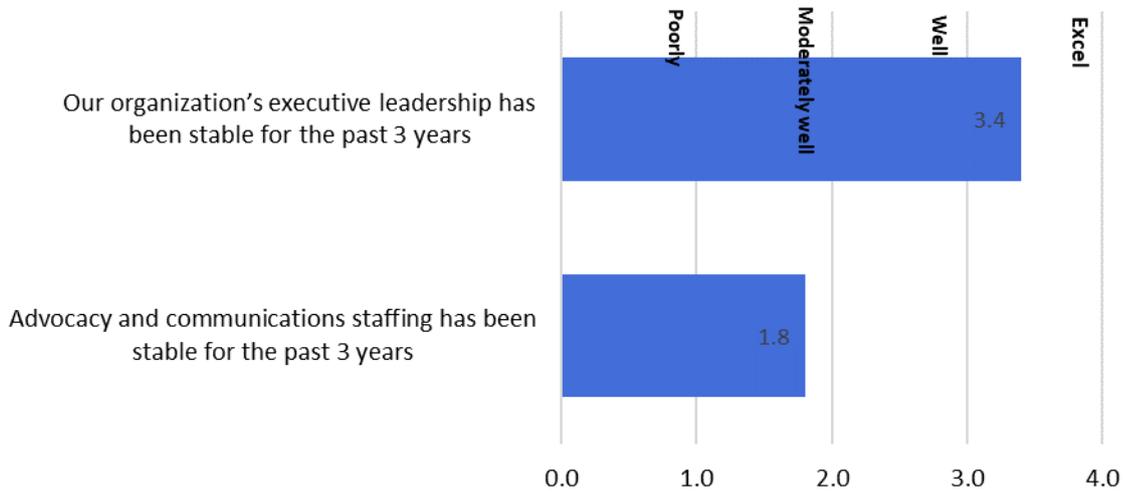**Organizational resources > Staff stability & commitment**

Figure 24: *Average scores for the staff stability sub-component within institutional resources section*

Governance and leadership

Organizational resources > Governance & leadership

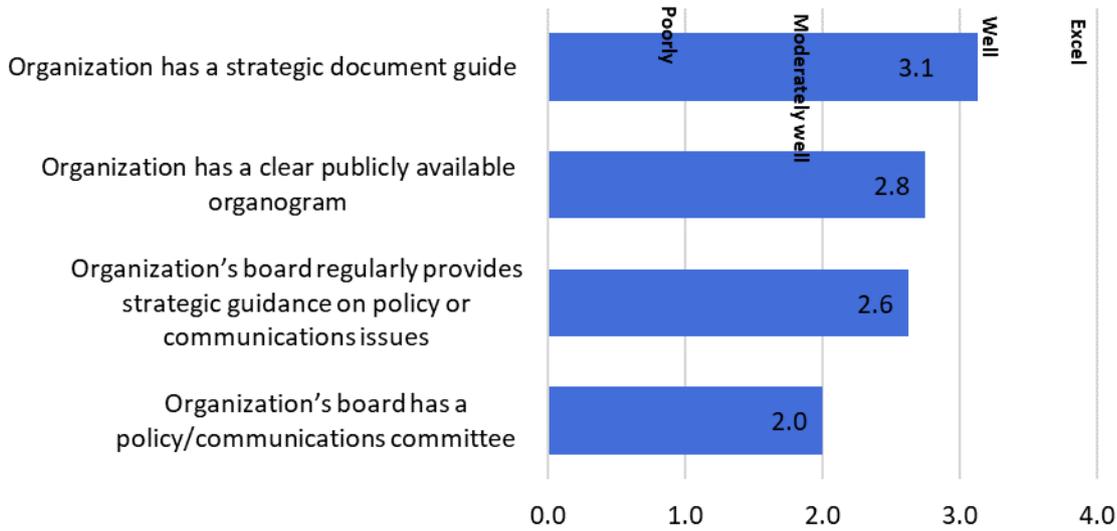|	Poorly	Moderately well	Well	Excel
Organization has a strategic document guide			3.1	
Organization has a clear publicly available organogram		2.8		
Organization's board regularly provides strategic guidance on policy or communications issues		2.6		
Organization's board has a policy/communications committee	2.0			

Figure 25: Average scores for the governance and leadership sub-component within institutional resources section

Reputation and credibility

Organizational resources > Reputation & credibility

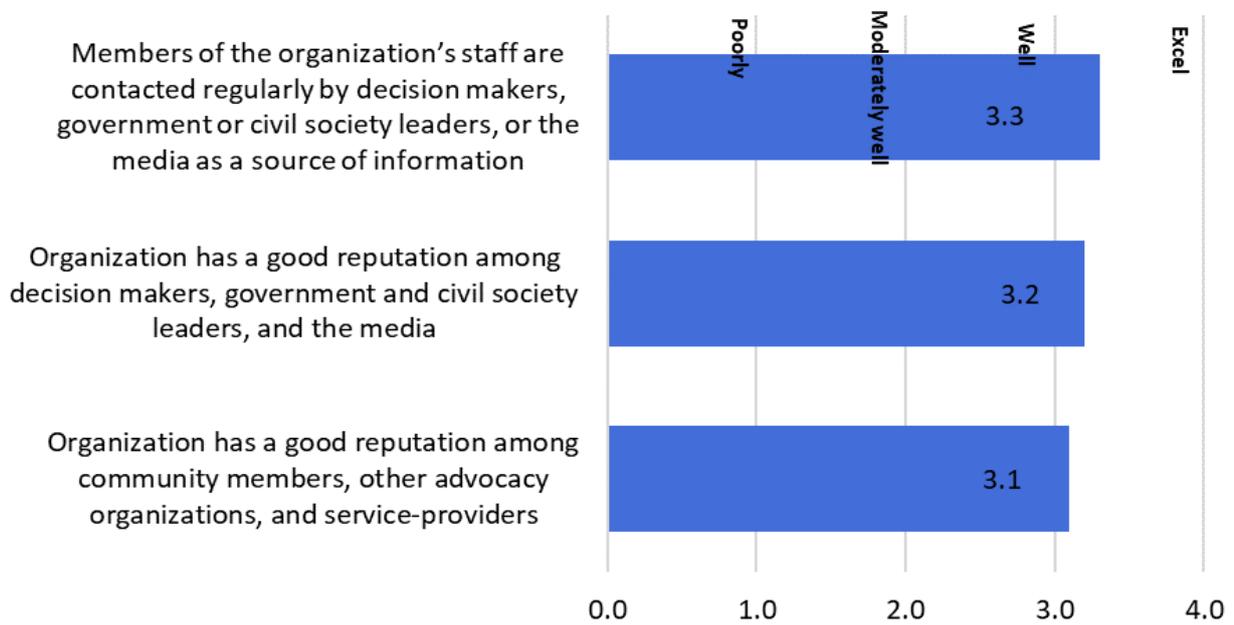|	Poorly	Moderately well	Well	Excel
Members of the organization's staff are contacted regularly by decision makers, government or civil society leaders, or the media as a source of information			3.3	
Organization has a good reputation among decision makers, government and civil society leaders, and the media			3.2	
Organization has a good reputation among community members, other advocacy organizations, and service-providers			3.1	

Figure 26: Average scores for the reputation credibility sub-component within institutional resources section

WORK AREA SPECIFIC ACTIONS & BEHAVIORS
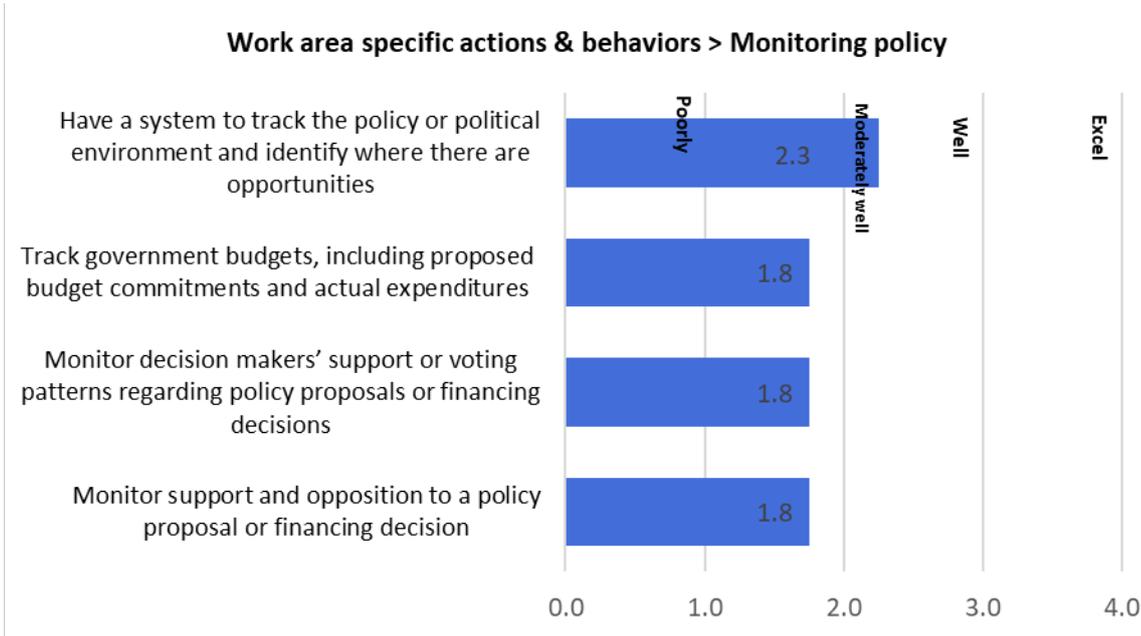
Monitoring policy

Figure 27: Average scores for the monitoring policy sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section
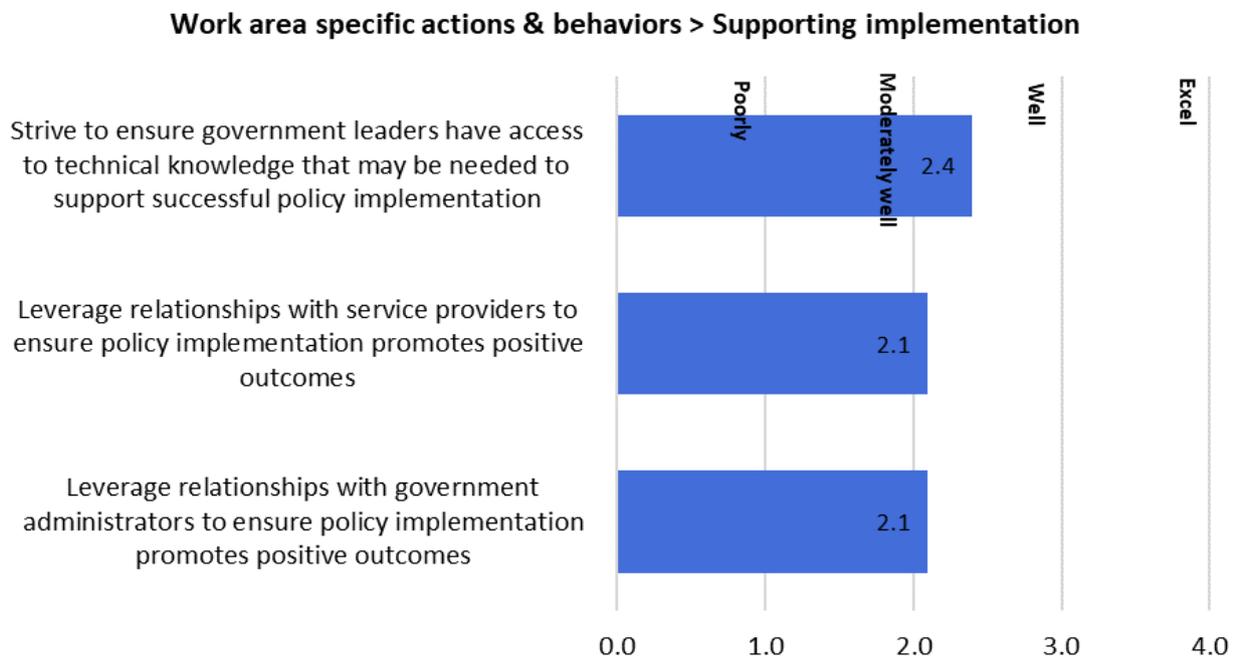
Supporting implementation

Figure 28: Average scores for the supporting implementation sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Work area specific actions & behaviors > Engaging communities

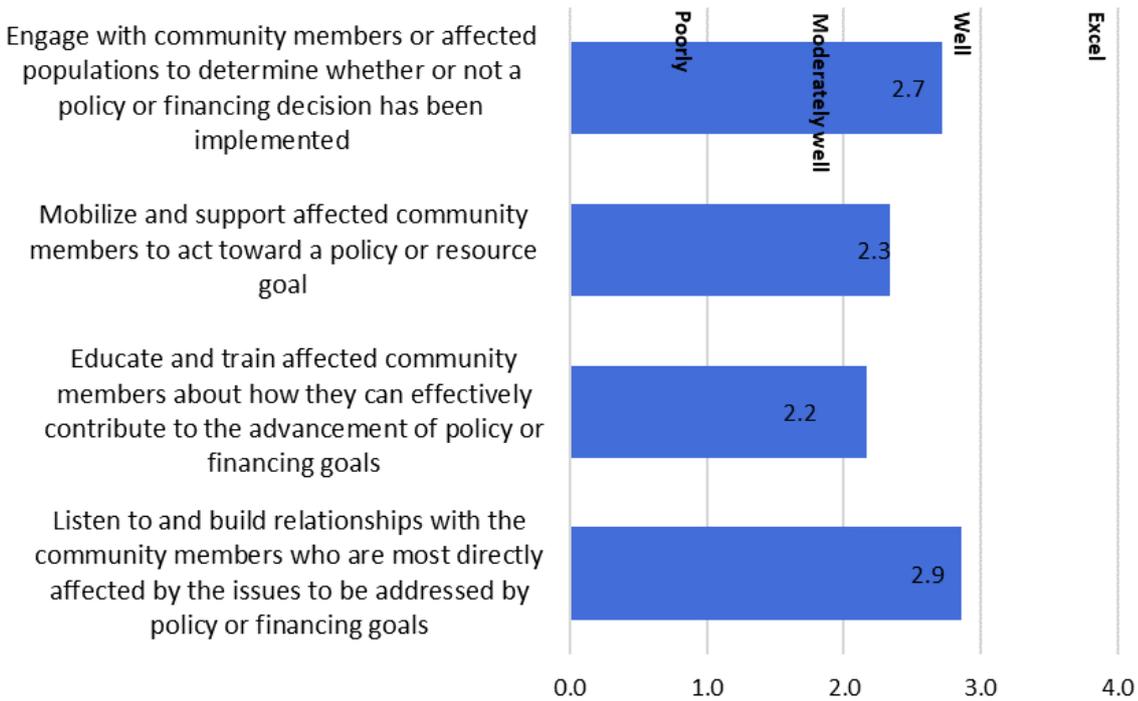*Figure 29: Average scores for the engaging communities sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section*

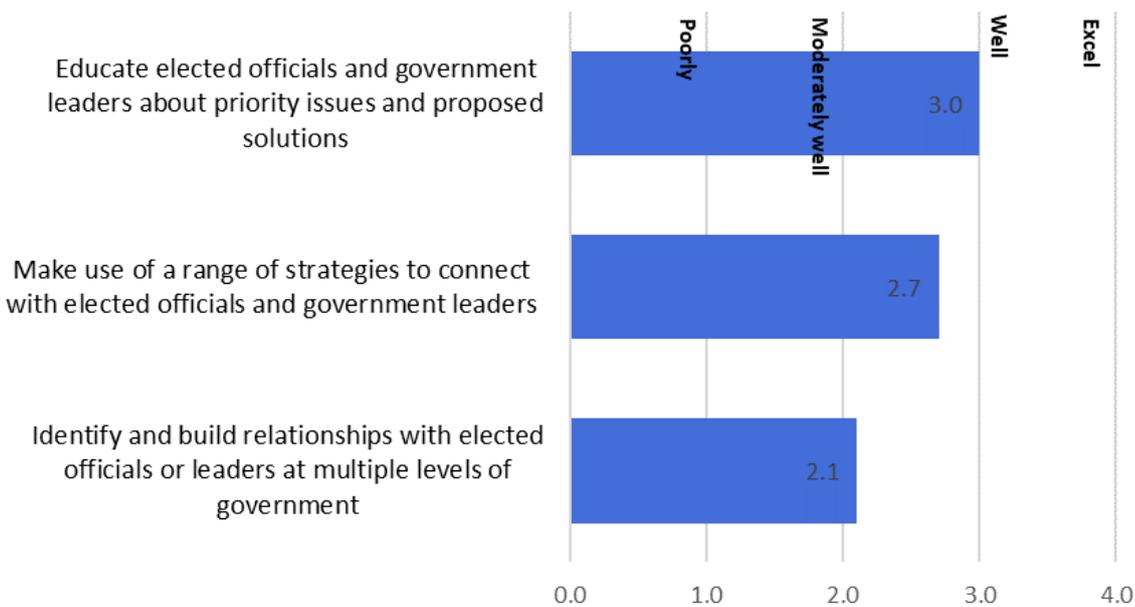**Work area specific actions & behaviors > Engaging elected officials**

Figure 30: Average scores for the engaging elected officials sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Developing policy

Work area specific actions & behaviors > Developing policy

Consider and represent the needs of community members affected by policy or financing decisions when developing policy proposals — 2.8

Develop policy proposals and legislation informed by data or research — 2.8

Incorporate policy and/or analysis of government budgets into policy proposals — 2.7
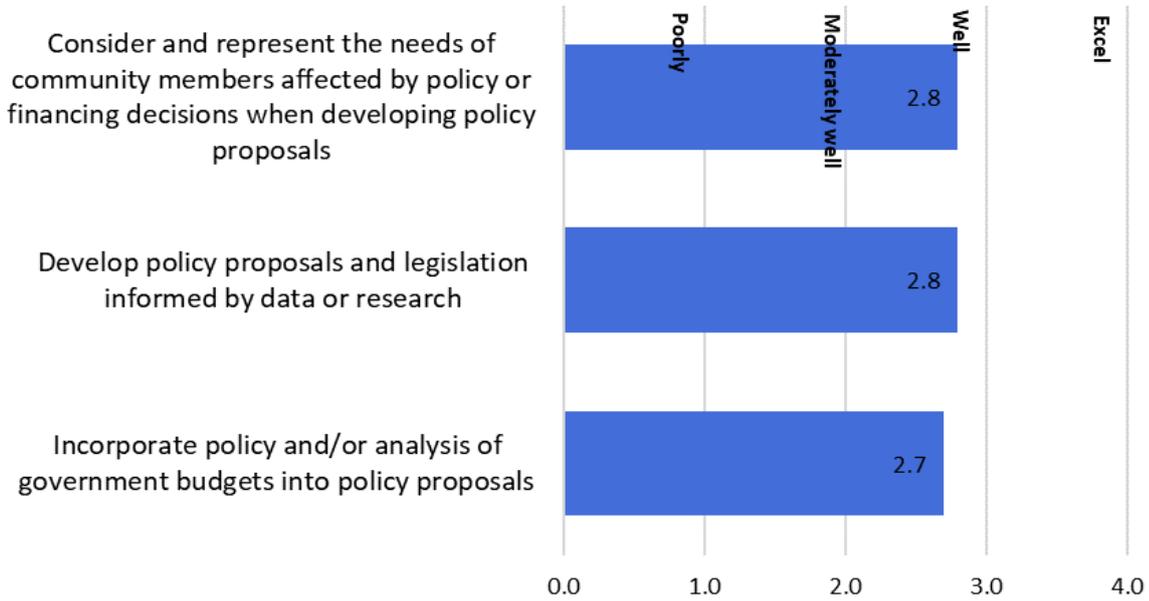
Figure 31: Average scores for the developing policy sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Engaging civil society leaders

Work area specific actions & behaviors > Engaging civil society leaders
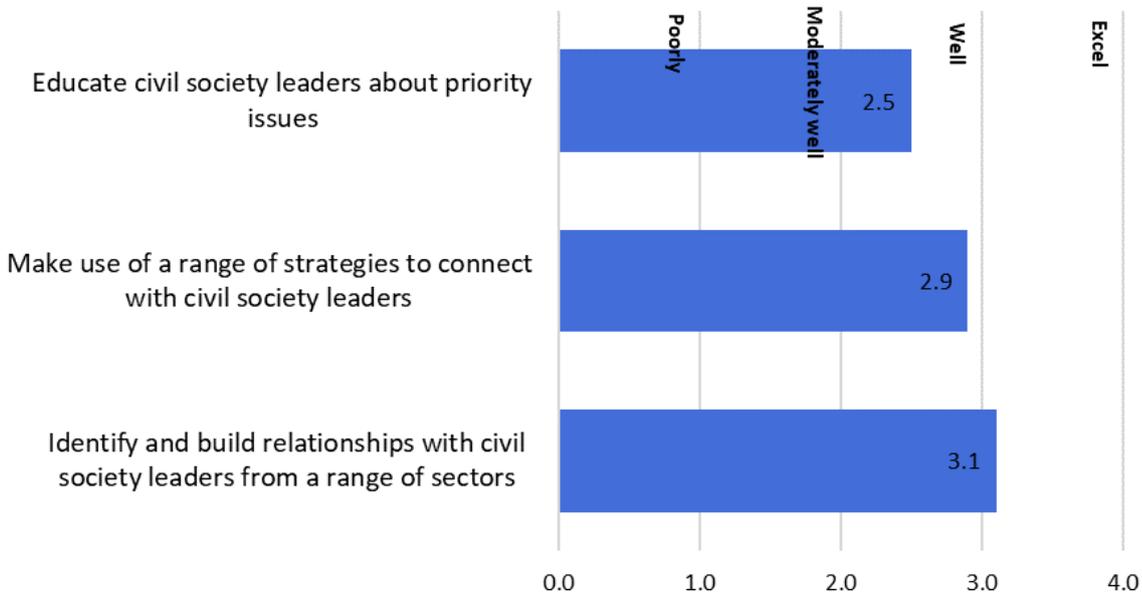
Educate civil society leaders about priority issues — 2.5

Make use of a range of strategies to connect with civil society leaders — 2.9

Identify and build relationships with civil society leaders from a range of sectors — 3.1

Figure 32: Average scores for the engaging civil society leaders sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Using data to make a compelling case before decision makers

Work area specific actions & behaviors > Using data to make the case

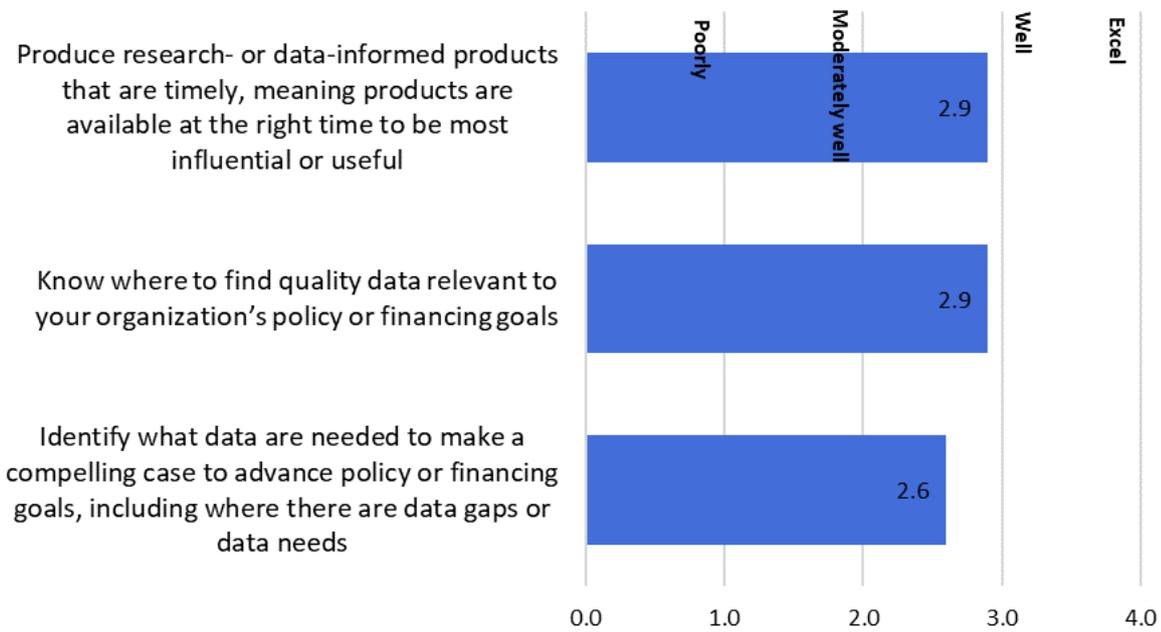|	Poorly	Moderately well	Well	Excel
Produce research- or data-informed products that are timely, meaning products are available at the right time to be most influential or useful			2.9	
Know where to find quality data relevant to your organization's policy or financing goals			2.9	
Identify what data are needed to make a compelling case to advance policy or financing goals, including where there are data gaps or data needs			2.6	

Figure 33: Average scores for the using data to make the case sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Developing messages

Work area specific actions & behaviors > Developing messages

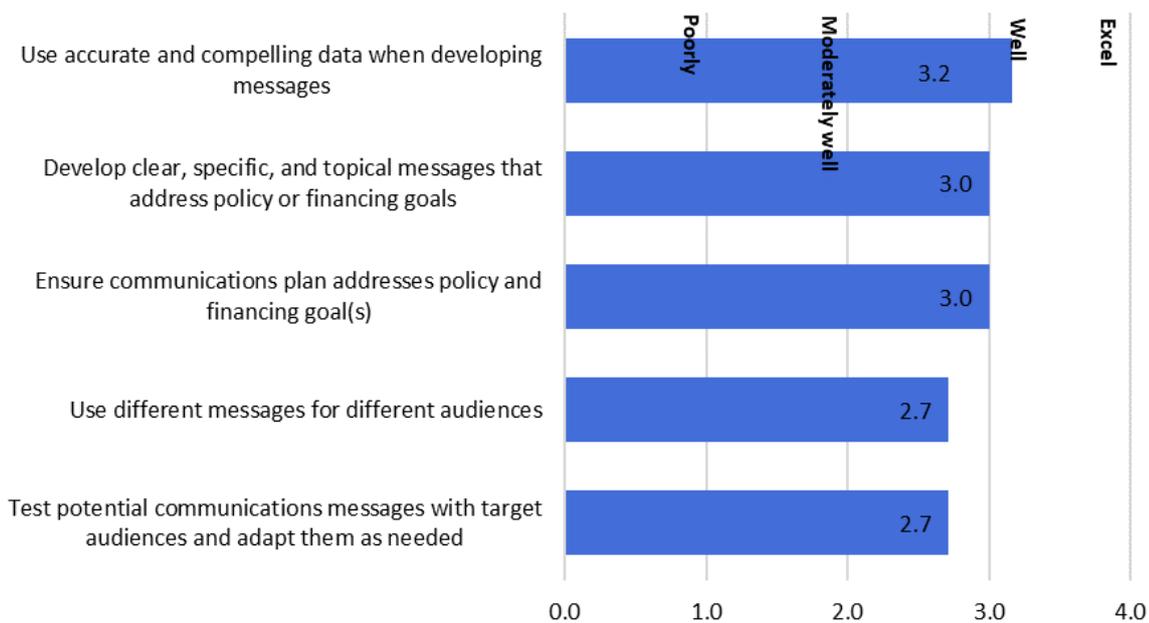|	Poorly	Moderately well	Well	Excel
Use accurate and compelling data when developing messages			3.2	
Develop clear, specific, and topical messages that address policy or financing goals			3.0	
Ensure communications plan addresses policy and financing goal(s)			3.0	
Use different messages for different audiences			2.7	
Test potential communications messages with target audiences and adapt them as needed			2.7	

Figure 34: Average scores for the developing messages sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

Disseminating messages

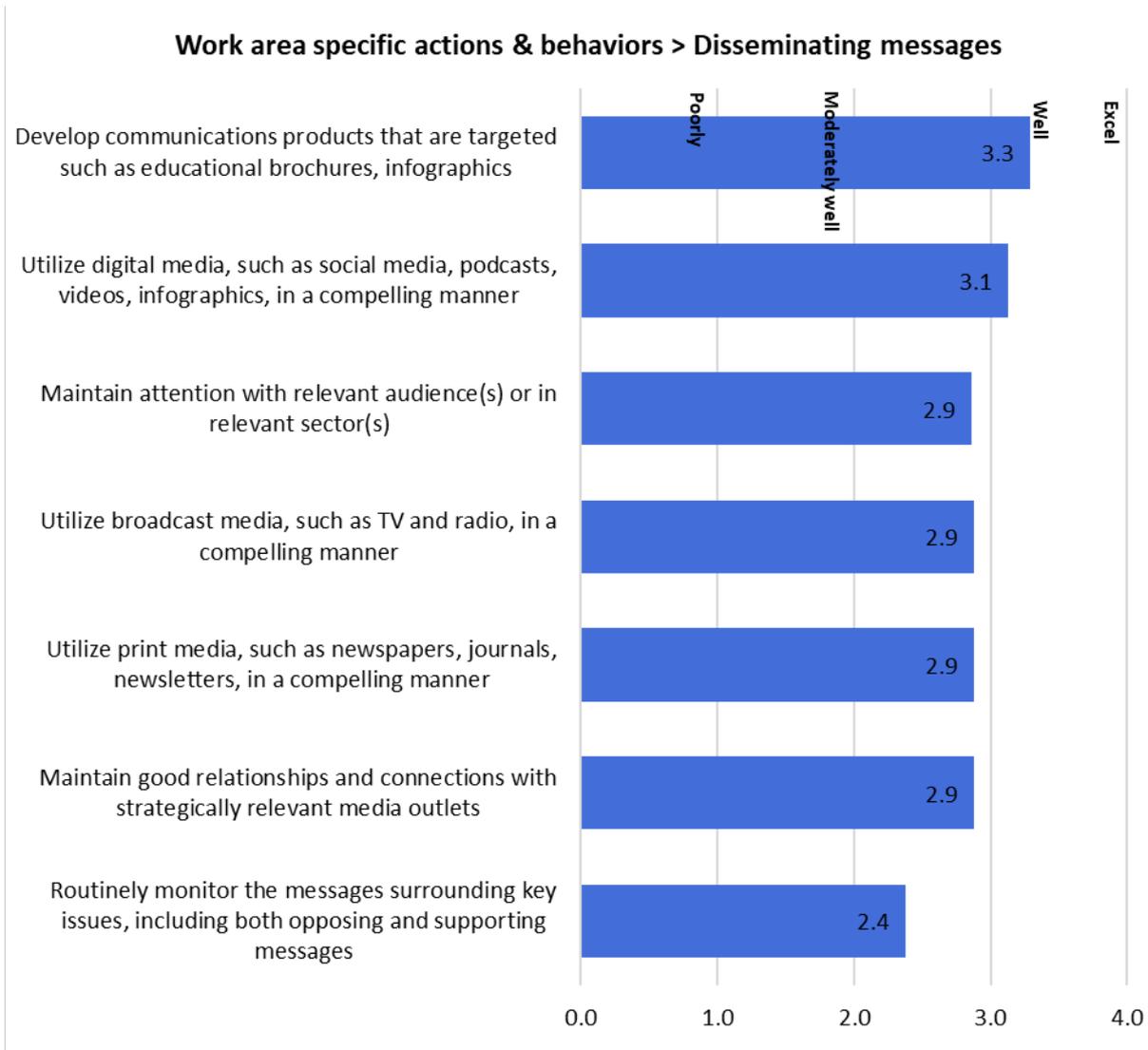**Work area specific actions & behaviors > Disseminating messages**

Figure 35: Average scores for the disseminating messages sub-component within work area specific actions and behaviors section

ANNEX 3

This section highlights institutional profiles with key information on each institution including basic information, sources of funding, important publications with impact factor, research expenditure vis-à-vis total expenditure, dissemination activities, total number of research staff, insights from in-depth interviews, and average scores of the individual capacity assessment. Missing information from the institutional profile implies that the institution did not submit the information during data collection.

Institutional Profile

Institution: GEEP

Vision: To further influence the reforms related to the different curricula in different programs in Senegal.

Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 1993
- HQ: Senegal
- Type: Private
- Area of work: Health education

Funding source in 3 yrs
- UNFPA
- REAS
- APECSID - PANOS - ANCS

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 4
- Publication in noted journal: Revue nationale
- Avg impact factor: 5

Figure 36: Basic profile of GEEP

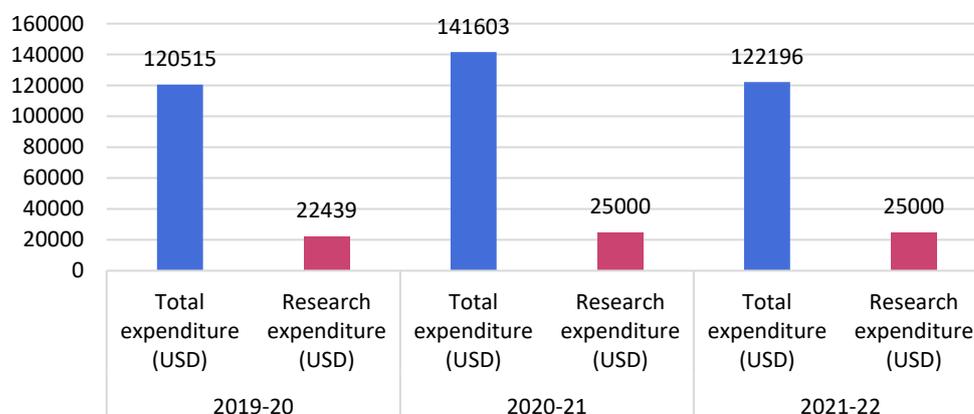### Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 37: Share of research expenditure in GEEP from the last three financial years
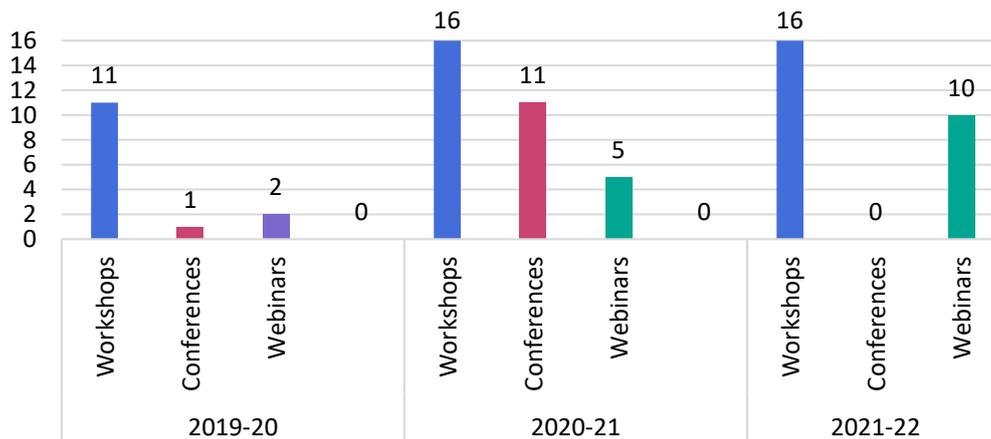
Dissemination activities

Figure 38: Dissemination activities of GEEP from the last three financial years
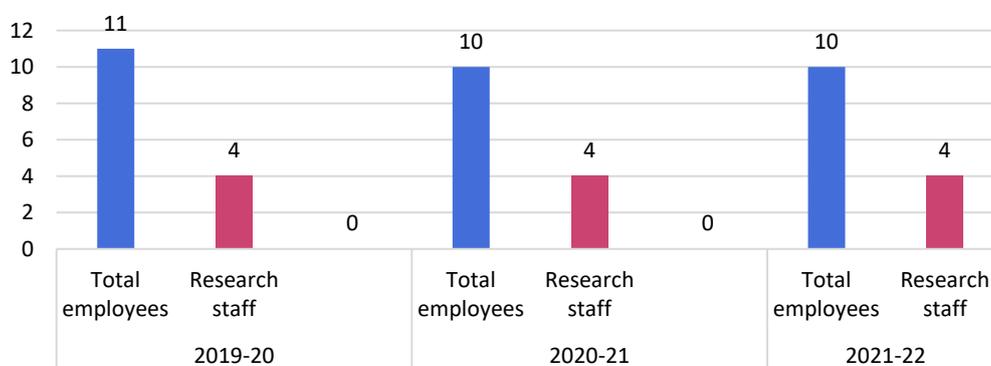
Total vs. research staff

Figure 39: Share of research staff in GEEP from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
•The research allows to influence policy by providing evidence to the decision makers •Signed a protocol with the Ministry of National Education to contribute to innovation and contribution to reforms in the education sector •Contribute significantly to innovations and the development of evidence in Senegal	•To reach its maximum organizational capacity we need to develop capacity to mobilize resources •Resource mobilization and staff stability are interconnected •Develop a robust advocacy practice in the organization to showcase evidence generated through our research	•Resource mobilization •Communication and policy advocacy •Support/capacity to stabilize research teams

Figure 40: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at GEEP
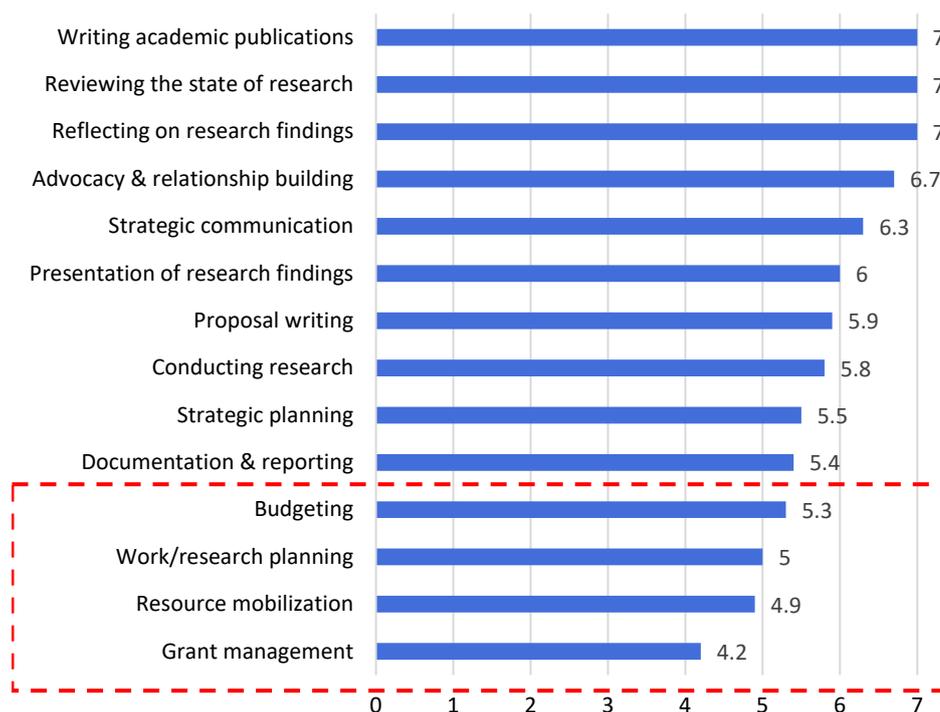
Figure 41: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: Cabinet iSER

Vision: To become a professional institution of quality in monitoring, evaluation, and research with the aim to be the reference institution in research in family planning in Togo.

Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 2021
- HQ: Togo
- Type: Private
- Area of work: SRH, MCH, FP, public health, gender, environment

Funding source in 3 yrs
- ONG GRASE-Population
- Against Malaria Foundation
- Ministry of primary, secondary, technical and craft education, Togo
- UNFPA

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 3
- Publication in noted journal:National Library of Medicine, National Centre for Biotechnology Information
- Avg impact factor: 6

Figure 42: Basic profile of Cabinet iSER

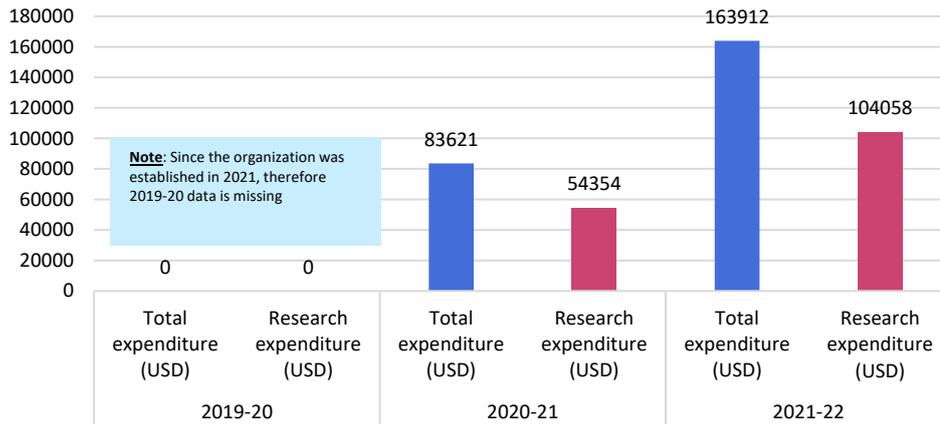## Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 43: Share of research expenditure in Cabinet iSER from the last three financial years
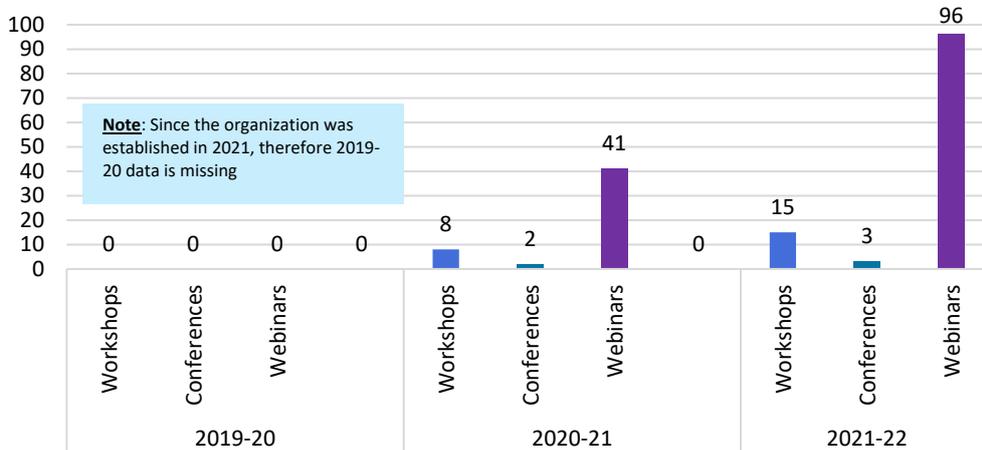
Dissemination activities

Figure 44: Dissemination activities of Cabinet iSER from the last three financial years
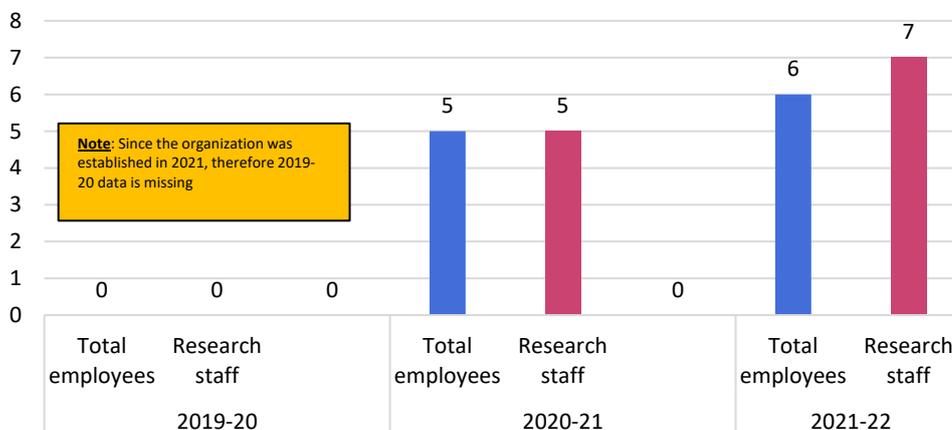
Total vs. research staff

Figure 45: Share of research staff in Cabinet iSER from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• Collaboration with the directorate of MCH program at Ministry of Health	• Capacity to influence decision makers • Developing our communications pool for advocacy • Communications plan that focuses on the instant production of articles and other knowledge products • Training to exploit the data and transform it into powerful messages for decision makers • Scaling up theories	• Strengthening capacity in partner search • Fund raising • Partnership and grant management • Ability to use, analyze and interpret our research data, to turn them into messages and communications • To develop the advocacy cycle right through to the decision makers • To transform research results into articles & policy briefs

Figure 46: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at Cabinet iSER

Average of individual capacity assessment (n=13)

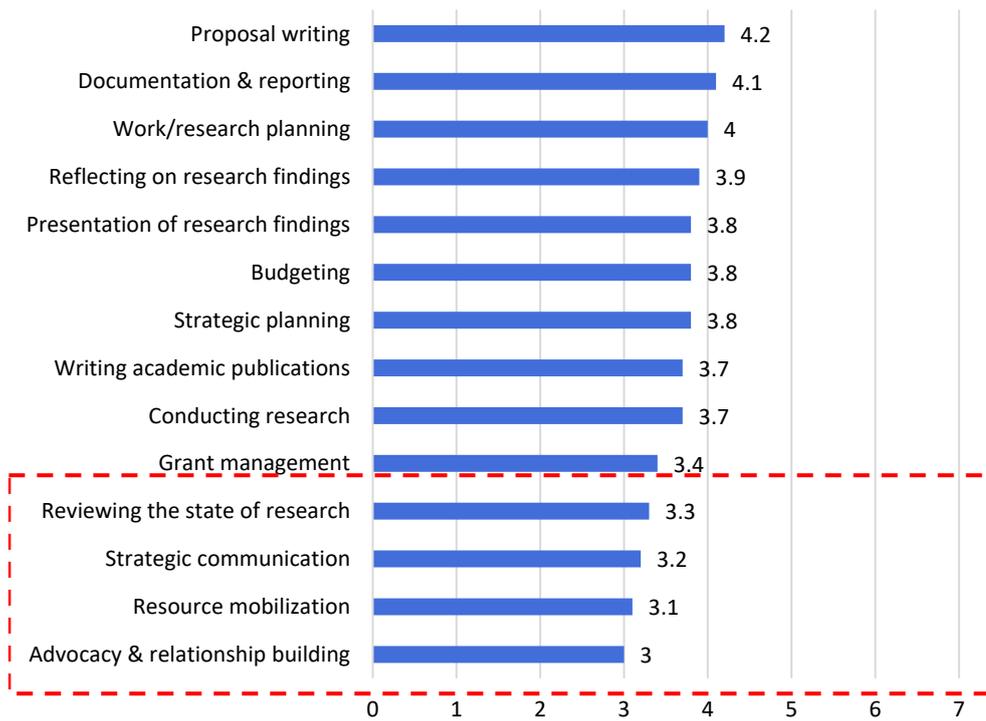|	Score
Proposal writing	4.2
Documentation & reporting	4.1
Work/research planning	4
Reflecting on research findings	3.9
Presentation of research findings	3.8
Budgeting	3.8
Strategic planning	3.8
Writing academic publications	3.7
Conducting research	3.7
Grant management	3.4
Reviewing the state of research	3.3
Strategic communication	3.2
Resource mobilization	3.1
Advocacy & relationship building	3

Figure 47: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: LARTES IFAN

Vision: To be a pioneer in establishing link between research and data produced by the research.
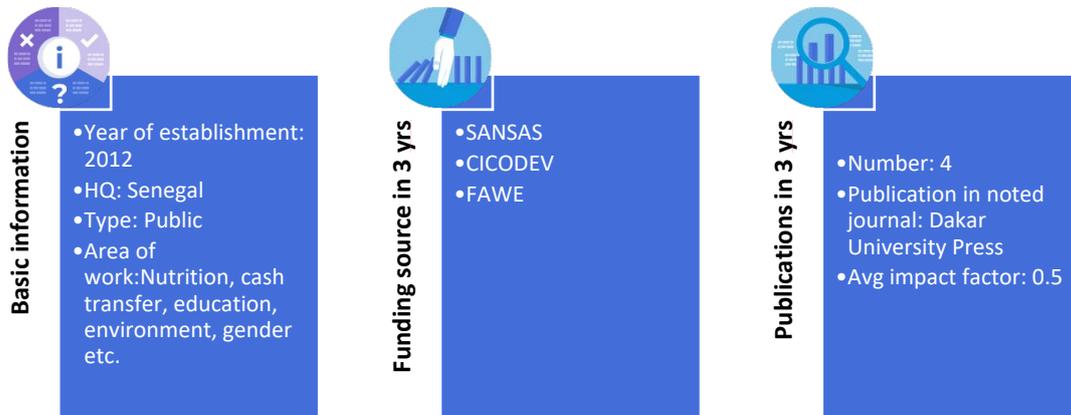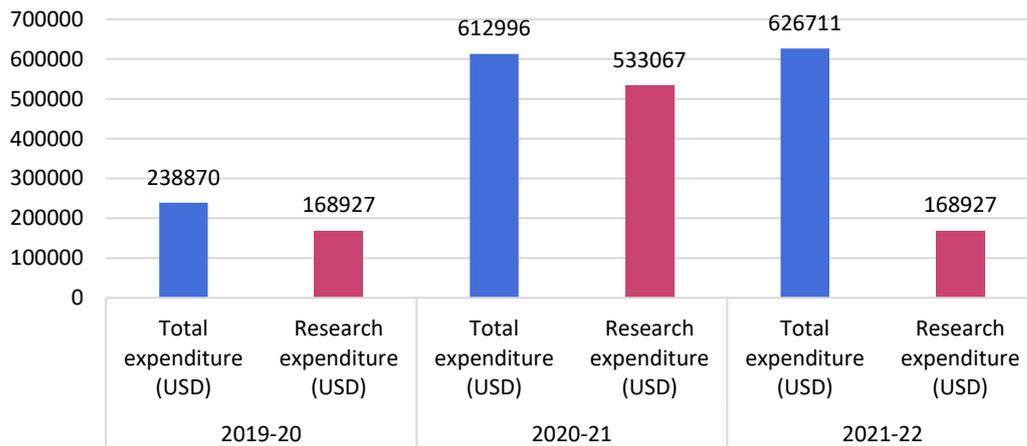
Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 2012
- HQ: Senegal
- Type: Public
- Area of work: Nutrition, cash transfer, education, environment, gender etc.

Funding source in 3 yrs
- SANSAS
- CICODEV
- FAWE

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 4
- Publication in noted journal: Dakar University Press
- Avg impact factor: 0.5

Figure 48: Basic profile of LARTES IFAN

Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 49: Share of research expenditure in LARTES IFAN from the last three financial years
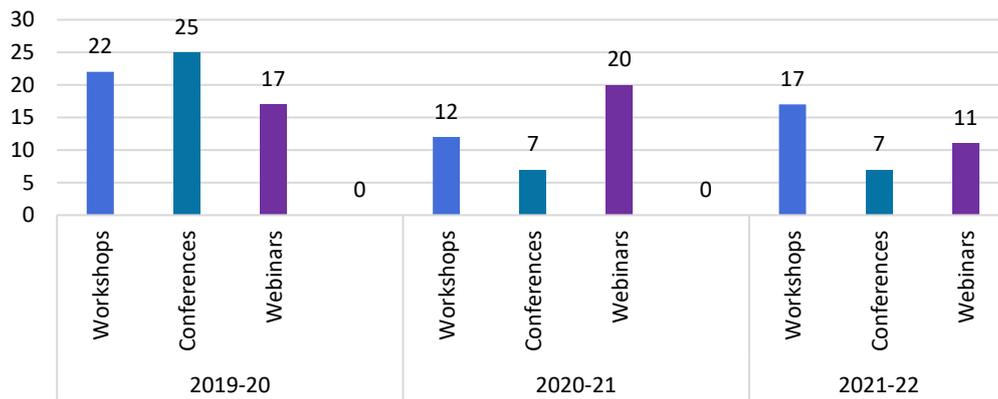
Dissemination activities

Figure 50: Dissemination activities of LARTES IFAN from the last three financial years
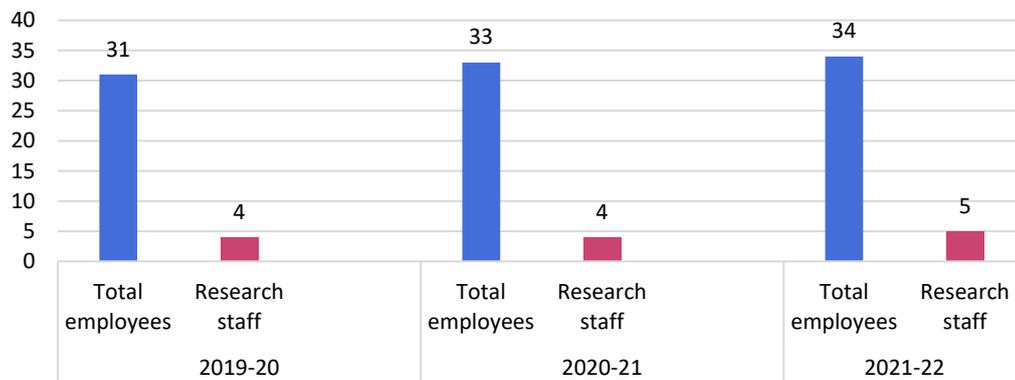
Total vs research staff

Figure 51: Share of research staff in LARTES IFAN from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
•Key players in the new social protection law in Senegal. Member of the social protection delegation •With the Ministry of Social and Solidarity Economy, we took part in the drafting of the law. We are the Ministry's advisor and a member of the board	• Lack resources specialized in knowledge management •Fundraising for research projects •Need capacity strengthening to have policy brief out for research, strategic document development. •Knowledge transfer and advocacy activities	•Advocacy •Knowledge management •English skills

Figure 52: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at LARTES IFAN

Average of individual capacity assessment (n=3)

Figure 53: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: CRESAR-CI

Vision: CRESAR-CI is a multi-disciplinary platform for medical, social and sociological research, and the goal of the organization is to provide stakeholders with evidence for decision-making
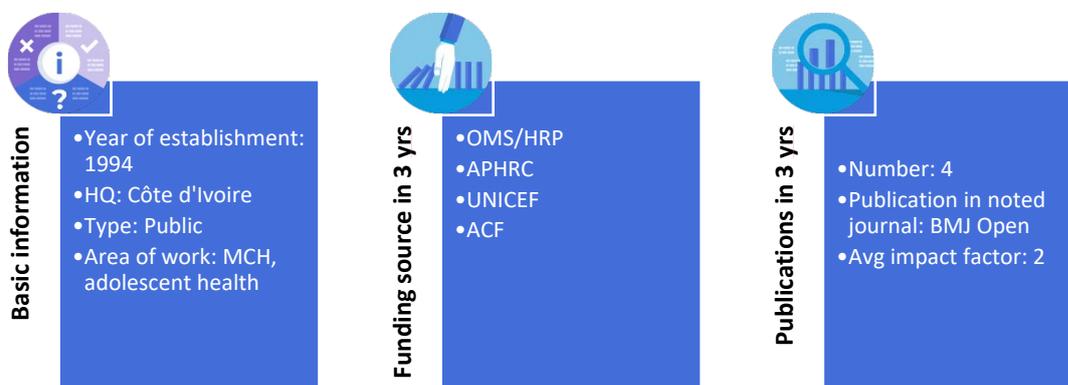
Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 1994
- HQ: Côte d'Ivoire
- Type: Public
- Area of work: MCH, adolescent health

Funding source in 3 yrs
- OMS/HRP
- APHRC
- UNICEF
- ACF

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 4
- Publication in noted journal: BMJ Open
- Avg impact factor: 2

Figure 54: Basic profile of CRESAR-CI

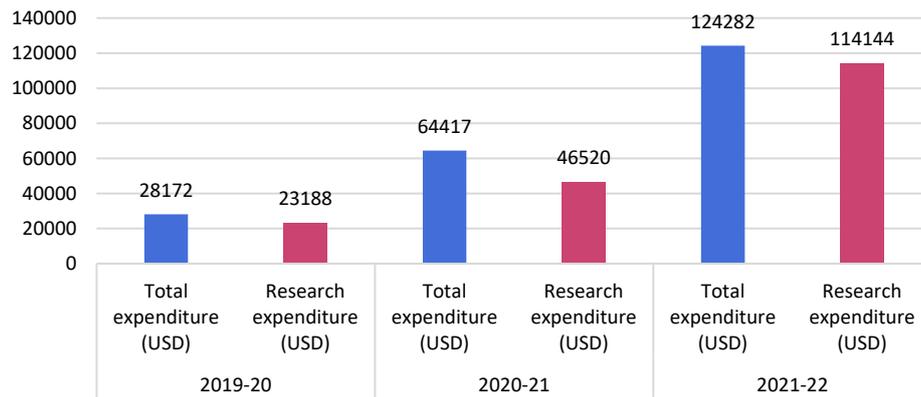## Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 55: Share of research expenditure in CRESAR-CI from the last three financial years
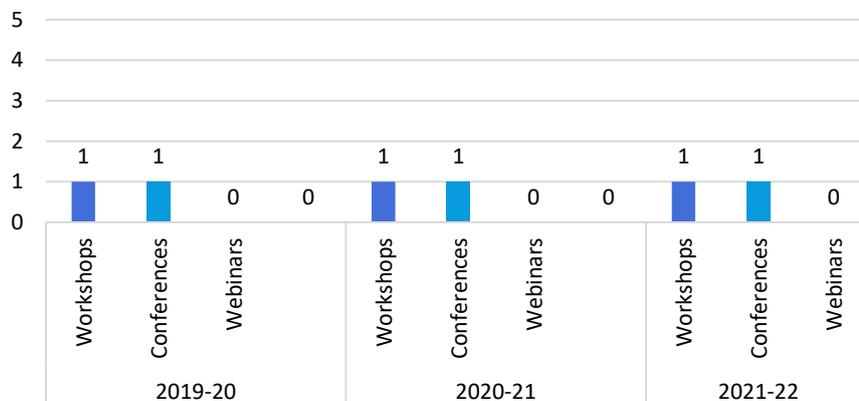
Dissemination activities

Figure 56: Dissemination activities of CRESAR-CI from the last three financial years
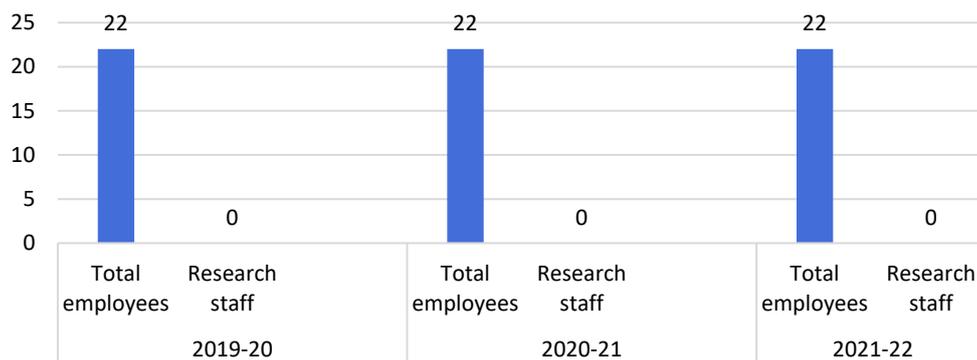
Total vs. research staff

Figure 57: Share of research staff in CRESAR-CI from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• We work closely with the MNCH program. We participate in all policy and standards documents relating to MNCH.	• Data advocacy • Developing policy notes and policy briefs • Capacity challenges in disseminating knowledge products • Ensuring that research results are used and implemented • Advocacy skills: In one of the projects another organization did the advocacy at the level of parliamentarians for immunization financing	• Data analysis • Advocacy skills • How to use data for advocacy and knowledge transfer • Fund raising and fund utilization

Figure 58: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at CRESAR-CI

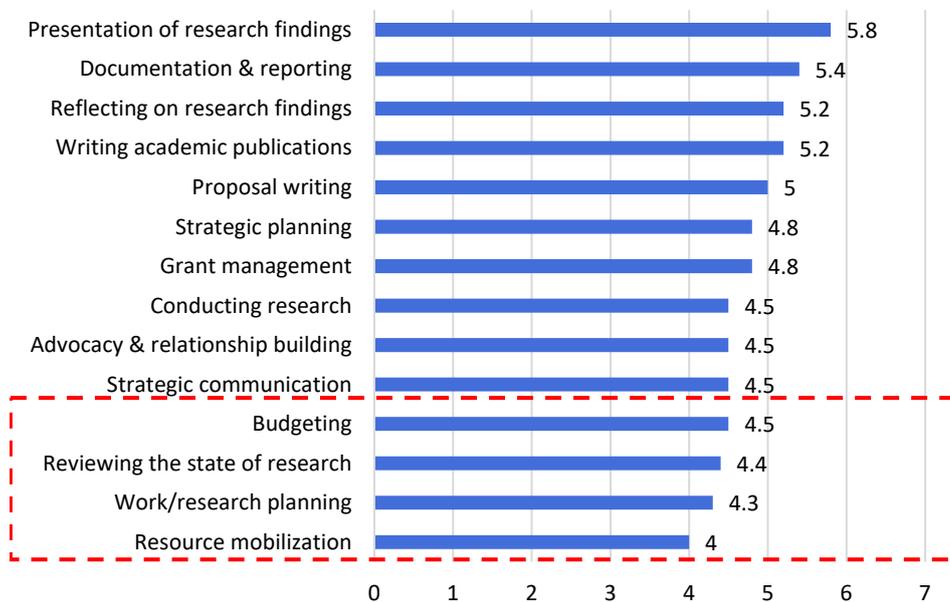## Average of individual capacity assessment (n=15)

Figure 59: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: LASDEL

Vision: To be a center of excellence in the region, in the fields of research and training.

Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 2007
- HQ: Niger
- Type: Private
- Area of work: Health policies and systems

Funding source in 3 yrs
- International institutions
- Self-financing

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 4
- Publication in noted journal: The Political Anthropology of Internalized Politics
- Avg impact factor: 0

Figure 60: Basic profile of LASDEL
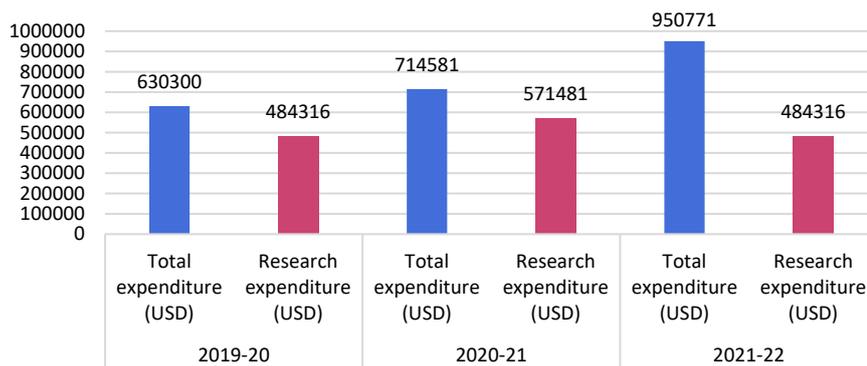
Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 61: Share of research expenditure in LASDEL from the last three financial years
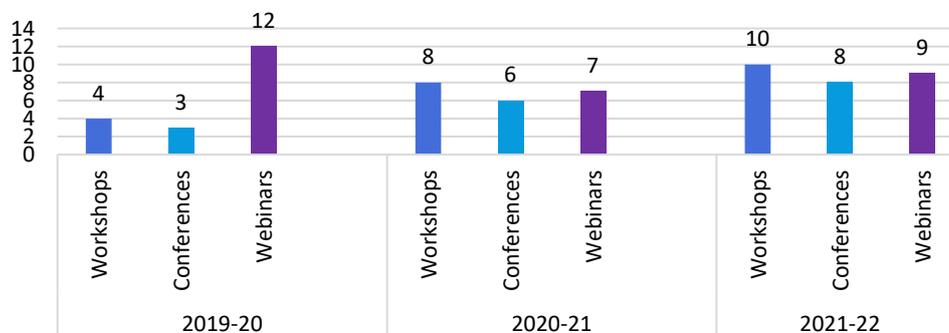
Dissemination activities

Figure 62: Dissemination activities of LASDEL from the last three financial years
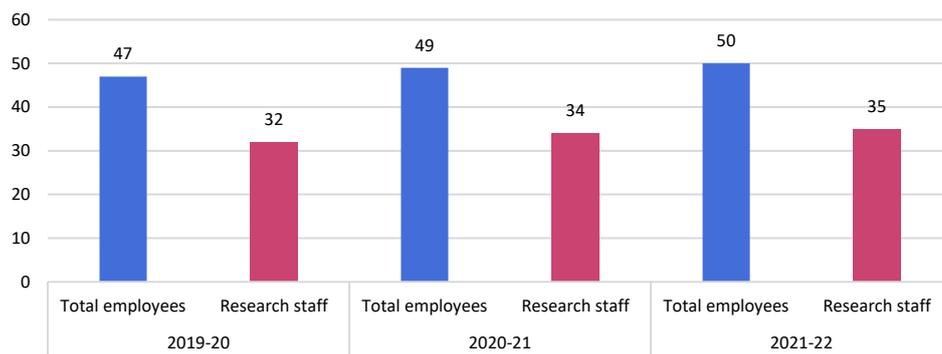
Total vs. research staff

Figure 63: Share of research staff in LASDEL from the last three financial years
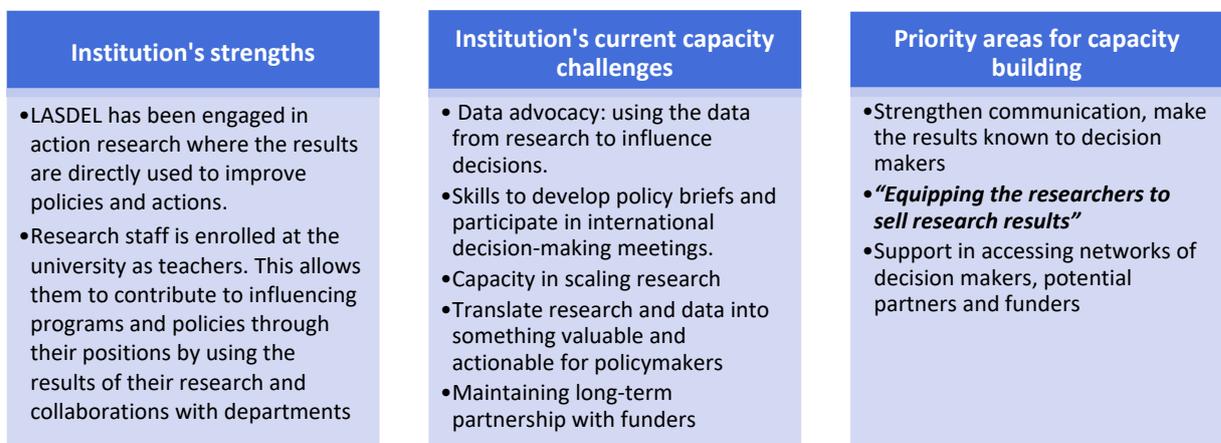
In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• LASDEL has been engaged in action research where the results are directly used to improve policies and actions. • Research staff is enrolled at the university as teachers. This allows them to contribute to influencing programs and policies through their positions by using the results of their research and collaborations with departments	• Data advocacy: using the data from research to influence decisions. • Skills to develop policy briefs and participate in international decision-making meetings. • Capacity in scaling research • Translate research and data into something valuable and actionable for policymakers • Maintaining long-term partnership with funders	• Strengthen communication, make the results known to decision makers • *"Equipping the researchers to sell research results"* • Support in accessing networks of decision makers, potential partners and funders

Figure 64: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at LASDEL

Average of individual capacity assessment (n=1)

Figure 65: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: ONASR

Vision: Organization wishes to position itself and contribute to the improvement of national strategies for the continuous improvement of sexual and reproductive health.
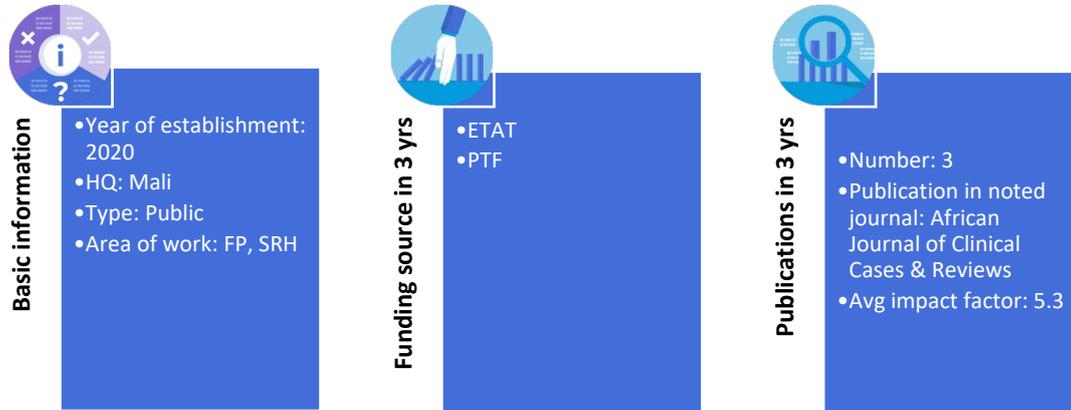
Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 2020
- HQ: Mali
- Type: Public
- Area of work: FP, SRH

Funding source in 3 yrs
- ETAT
- PTF

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 3
- Publication in noted journal: African Journal of Clinical Cases & Reviews
- Avg impact factor: 5.3

Figure 66: Basic profile of ONASR

Total vs. research expenditure

Note: Since the organization was established in 2020, therefore data is missing

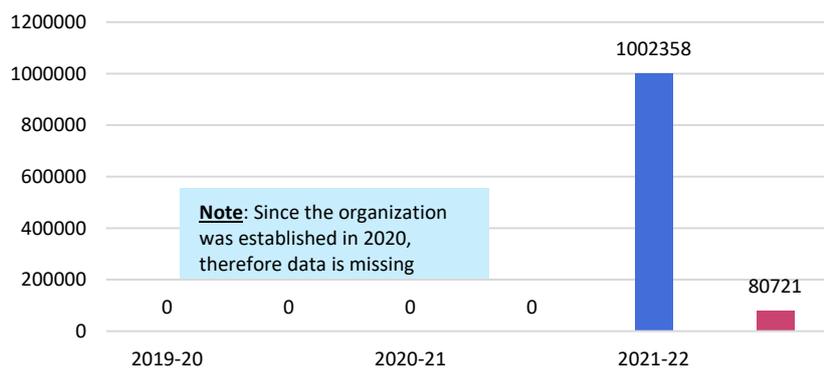*Figure 67:* Share of research expenditure in ONASR from the last three financial years

Dissemination activities

Note: Since the organization was established in 2020, therefore data is missing

Figure 68: Dissemination activities of ONASR from the last three financial years

Total vs. research staff

Note: Since the organization was established in 2020, therefore data is missing

Figure 69: Share of research staff in ONASR from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• ONASR, as the central structure of the MSDS, is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national RH policies and strategies. • It is responsible for better coordinating, on behalf of the department, in the implementation of reproductive health policies, strategies, programs and projects in Mali and for reporting to the Minister of Health.	• Capacity building in research, advocacy & policy influence • Consistent & timely funding of research protocols & innovations • Best practices in documentation, dissemination & sharing results at national/international platforms • Strengthening partnerships with other national & international research institutes to cultivate excellence	• Resource mobilization • Support in participation in national or international conferences and forums for exchanges and sharing of experiences between countries. • Fund raising • Documentation • Monitoring & evaluation

Figure 70: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at ONASR

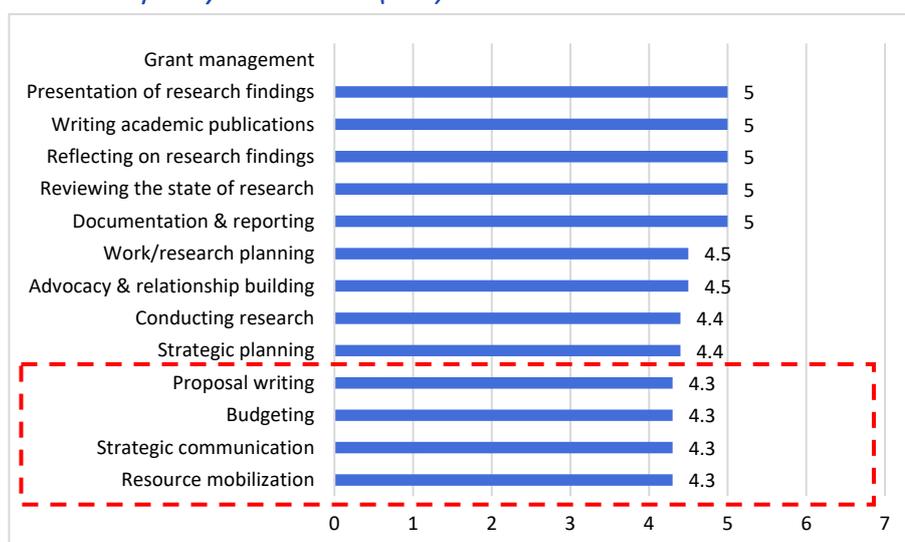## Average of individual capacity assessment (n=1)

Figure 71: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: IASP

Vision: To train researchers and leaders capable of conducting research in the health care system network
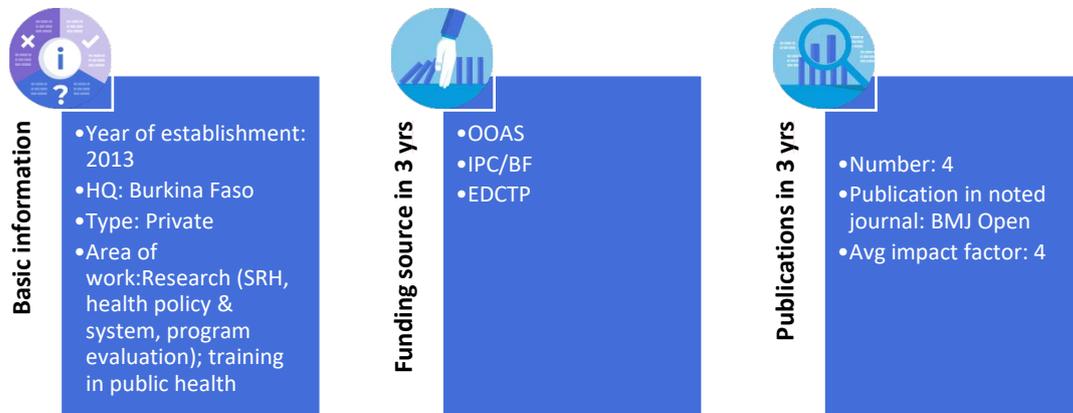
Profile

Figure 72: Basic profile of IASP
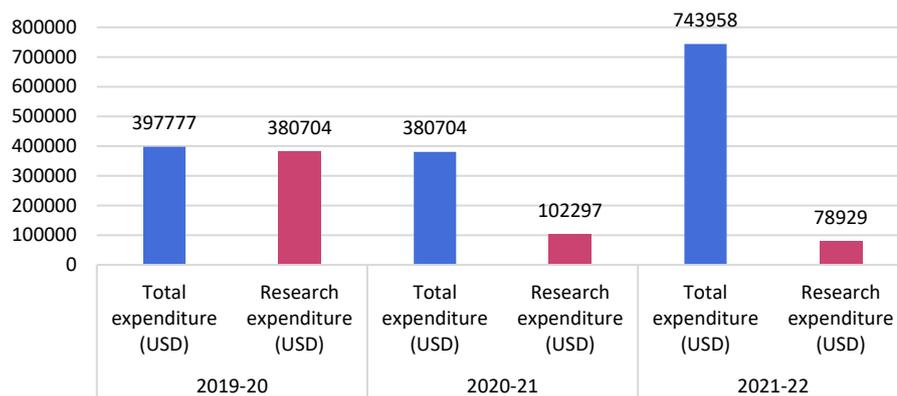
Total vs. research expenditure

Figure 73: Share of research expenditure in IASP from the last three financial years
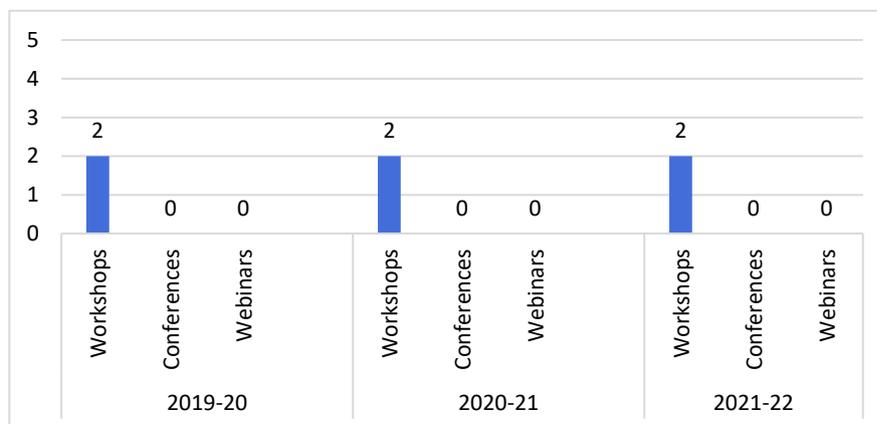
Dissemination activities

Figure 74: Dissemination activities of IASP from the last three financial years
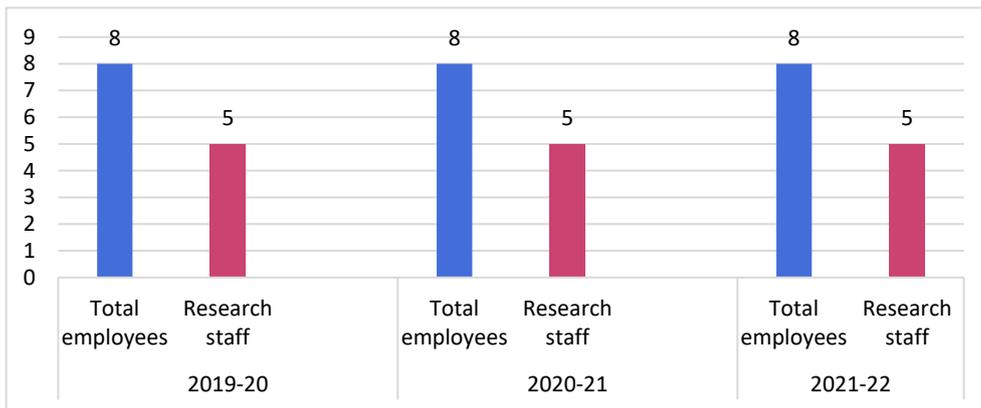
Total vs. research staff

Figure 75: Share of research staff in IASP from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• Conduct research on priority population health issues in Burkina Faso and Africa • Provide expertise to states and NGOs in the field of planning, development and evaluation of health care projects and programs.	• Since we train researchers, strengthening our pedagogical skills is a necessity • Ability to share research results with decisionmakers and making strong case for recommendations	• Support in participating in networking meetings • Fund raising

Figure 76: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at IASP

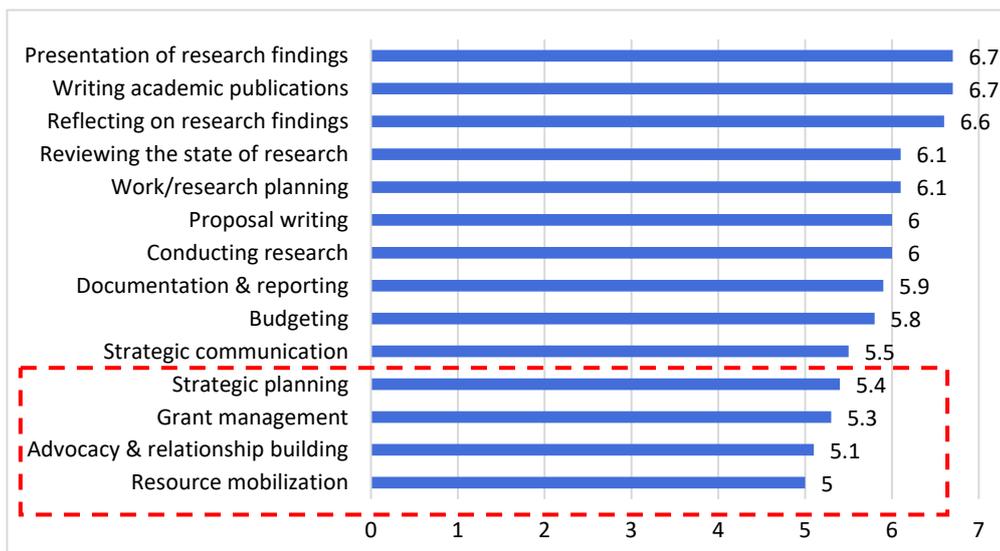## Average of individual capacity assessment (n=3)

Figure 77: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: IRSS

Vision: To generate and share evidence to policymakers and decision makers

Profile

Basic information
- Year of establishment: 1997
- HQ: Burkina Faso
- Type: Private
- Area of work: Malaria & vectors, nutrition, infectious diseases, SRH, FP, non-communicable diseases

Funding source in 3 yrs
- USAID
- European & Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership

Publications in 3 yrs
- Number: 4
- Publication in noted journal: BMJ Open
- Avg impact factor: 4

Figure 78: Basic profile of IRSS

Total vs. research expenditure
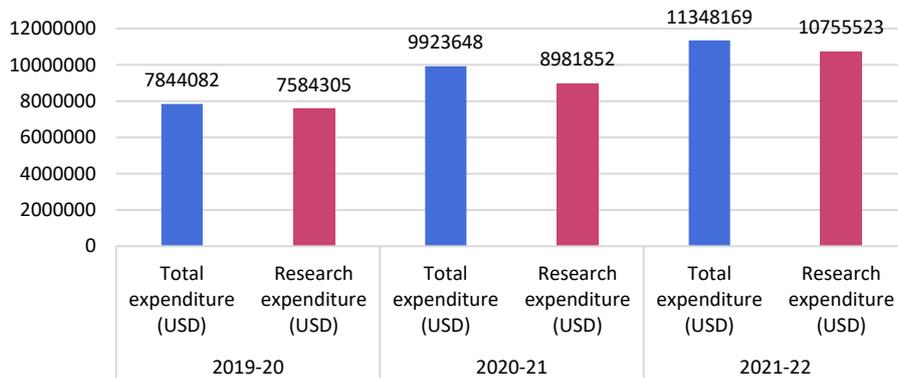
Figure 79: Share of research expenditure in IRSS from the last three financial years
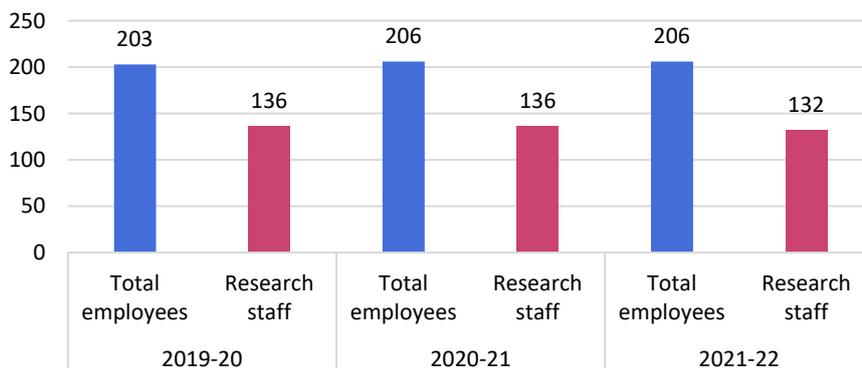
Total vs research staff

Figure 80: Share of research staff in IRSS from the last three financial years

In-depth interviews insights

Institution's strengths	Institution's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• Experience of evidence sharing through policy briefs, knowledge sharing • In the past three years, worked with WHO to implement the newborn guideline in MCH • Produced high volume of evidence and many publications. Has >200 research at IRSS	• Don't have a strategy to influence policymakers. • Lack of strategic plan for policy communication, advocacy, influence • Great experience in publishing articles, generating evidence and sharing through policy briefs. Challenge: the efforts are not efficient. • Inadequate capacity and people for advocacy and to influence policy in evidence use.	• Train researchers in advocacy and policy influence • Building a communication unit and training them • Policy writing

Figure 81: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at IRSS

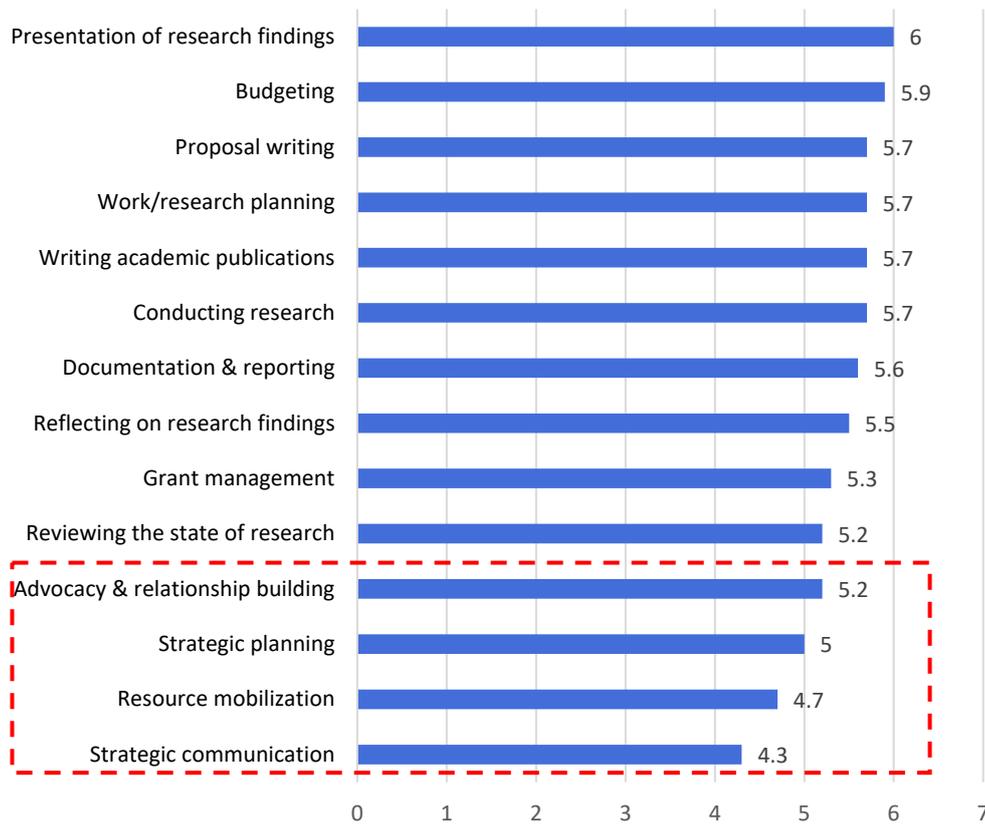## Average of individual capacity assessment (n=5)

Figure 82: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff

INSTITUTION: CERREGUI

Vision: The results of the research and data that the organization is collecting must be used to influence policy

In-depth interviews insights

Organization's strengths	Organization's current capacity challenges	Priority areas for capacity building
• Contributed to the implementation of 8-9 Ministry of Health policies • Organization in a position of generating research results, potential to make the case for the application of the research results	• Don't have a strategy to influence policymakers • Need strategic plan for policy communication, advocacy, influence • Need capacity to mobilize funds • Staff not trained in scaling up theories • Need support in translating policy documents into actionable items for the policymakers • Critical capacity building need in advocacy and communication	• Advocacy and policy influence • Building a communication unit and training them • Policy writing • Grant management • Data analysis • Scaling theories • Fund raising and resource mobilization

Figure 83: Insights from the in-depth interviews with the leadership at CERREGUI

Average of individual capacity assessment (n=4)

Figure 84: Average scores of individual capacity assessment of the research staff