REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Capacity Gap Assessment Report and Strengthening Plan for ASARECA and its Regional and National Partners

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Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AIS	Agricultural Innovation Systems
AR4D	Agricultural Research for Development
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAADP-XP4	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Ex-Pillar 4 Organizations
CCARDESA	Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CCCSP	Comprehensive Capacity Compliance and Strengthening Plan
CDAIS	Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems
CGA	Capacity Gap Assessment
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
DESIRA	Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture
EC	European Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
OCA	Organisational Capacity Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRO	Sub-Regional Organisation
TAP	Tropical Agriculture Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

In support of ASARECA mandate and objectives of its new strategy, and in implementation of Output 1.1 of CAADP-XP4, a capacity gap assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country partners has been undertaken, to generate a regional synthesis report, and to develop a comprehensive compliance and capacity strengthening (CCCS) plan for ASARECA. The CCCS Plan will contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of ASARECA's new strategy and CAADP-XP4 Program. A theory of change has been developed to show how the CGA and CCCS will contribute to achieving the goals and mandate of ASARECA.

This publication therefore integrates the two complementary parts:
Part I: Report on Capacity Gap Assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country partners
Part II: Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country partners

The methodological approach followed a "system approach", based on widely used theories of system analysis and development. The selected System Approach – combined the Nadler Tuschman Congruence Model for Organizational Assessment and Development together with the FAO/TAP Common Framework for Capacity Development for Agricultural and Innovation Systems (CDAIS), the CDAIS 3 capacity dimensions' model, and the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment tool (OCA). The development of this comprehensive assessment approach was guided by CAADP-XP4 outputs and ASARECA strategic goals. This holistic system approach used inductive exploratory research, looking at primary and secondary data collected through document review and analysis, semi-structured focus group and individual interviews; and online surveys.

The findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment of ASARECA and its Partners have been presented by category of respondents and followed the CDAIS three domains of organizational capacities: the capacity to organize, to deliver and to relate. Findings from Board and Secretariat interviews identified a need for improvement in the level of recognition of ASARECA at the regional and national level, and a need to further emphasize the role of ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation, and gender and youth mainstreaming. Board and Secretariat also expressed a need for diversifying channels of communication and of resource mobilization for ASARECA.

Secretariat expressed a need for more investment in staff and building a learning organization with a culture of teamwork and collaboration. They also identified a need to complete and operationalise organizational systems and strategies; namely, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of ASARECA, the Knowledge Management System, and the Communication and Branding Strategy and System.

Due to the introduction of these new systems and strategies, Staff expressed a need to strengthen their capacities to contribute to the systems, each in their area of specialization. Capacities identified included technical capacities related to staff functions, and important functional capacities, namely strategizing and navigating complexity, partnering and collaborating, analyzing, reflection and learning, communication, evidence-based advocacy and public influencing, and adapting and responding to changing situations and partners' needs. Staff also expressed a need for motivation schemes and incentives to encourage them to handle the work pressures resulting from the changes and reform that ASARECA is undergoing.

The need for adequate staffing of the Secretariat to achieve the new strategy, has also been expressed. It was

suggested that innovative means of staffing need to be considered within the budget of the organization. Finally, it was suggested to reform and staff the current HR unit to perform a full-fledged HR function, or to use available expertise in HR to advise on HR action, systems and tools that support the organization and staff in maximizing performance towards goal achievement.

Development partners/donors found ASARECA's performance as either meeting expectations or exceeding expectations, yet, recommended that ASARECA strengthens the level of recognition of its role in the region and the support it is getting from its environment. Donors also recommended that ASARECA emphasizes its role in promotion of STIs for climate change and strengthens its communication channels and its impact on the public view. Global partners in their turn recommended that ASARECA further strengthens its recognition at regional and country levels, collaborates with sectors other than its regular partners, and strengthens its influence on policy decision making.

Regional partners identified no gaps and expressed that ASARECA's performance in the region either met expectations or exceeded expectations. They recommended that ASARECA further engages them in planning and implementation of regional initiatives; that ASARECA profiles the successful Agricultural STIs in the region; and that it further promotes and designs modalities of gender and youth mainstreaming. They emphasized the importance of the initiative of ASARECA on Knowledge Management and recommended that ASARECA ensures that partners from different sectors participate and benefit from its KM Hub.

Regional and National partners capacity self-assessment revealed gaps that needed to be addressed to enable these partners to work with ASARECA on achieving its mandate and strategy in the region. These identified capacity gaps related to the organizations' capacities in promoting and influencing policies, promoting gender and youth mainstreaming, brokering partnerships, communication, and resource mobilization. Organizations also expressed needs for developing internal systems such as their MEL System, KM System, their IT infrastructure, in addition to few administrative and financial functions such as the computerization of finance systems and of policies and procedures, and aligning their budget and staffing to their strategies.

 A separate capacity gap profile has been developed for each member country of ASARECA. Countries included in the CGA profiling were Burundi, DRC, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Tanzania. The findings of the capacity gap assessment of ASARECA and its partners will form the base for developing the Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) of ASARECA.
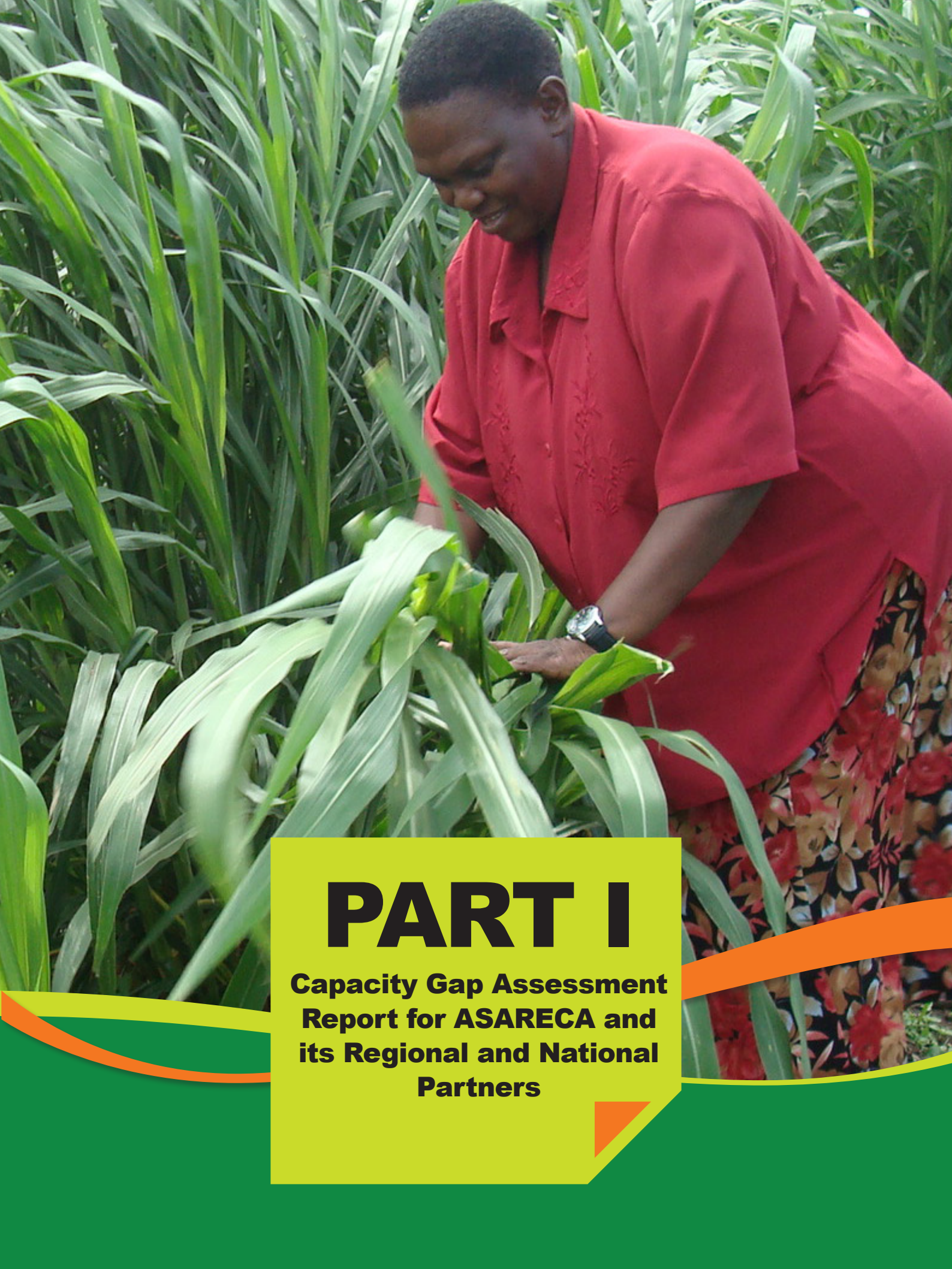
PART I

Capacity Gap Assessment Report for ASARECA and its Regional and National Partners

01

Introduction and Background of the Assignment

1.1 Background

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), together with the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), the West Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), and the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA) have started the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program - ex-Pillar 4 (CAADP-XP4)Program. The Program is funded by the European Commission (EC) over a period of four and half years (2019-2023)and is administered by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The CAADP-XP4 Program falls under Pillar IV of EC Initiative "Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture" (DeSIRA).

EC-DeSIRA aims at promoting science and innovation to achieve an inclusive, sustainable and climate relevant transformation of agriculture and related food systems in partner countries across the globe. DeSIRA embeds strategic and applied research in the wider context of development cooperation in agricultural innovation with a development lens. DeSIRA has four inter-related pillars, namely: Pillar I: innovation in agriculture, which ensures that bottlenecks are removed, and science and traditional knowledge are efficiently engaged in innovation to ensure that impact is taken through the last mile; Pillar II: Strengthening research infrastructure for innovation, aims at building the research and innovation capacities of African national agricultural research and extension systems; Pillar III: Disseminating knowledge and evidence to feed development policies; Pillar IV: Agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption, ensuring sustained flow of technologies which are sustainable and adequately meet the challenges of agriculture. Under Pillar IV, the EC has allocated funds to finance the implementation of Science-led Climate Relevant Agricultural Transformation in Africa through support to CAADP-XP4 institutions.

1.2 CAADP-XP4 Project and Targeted Outputs

The goal of CAADP-XP4 project is to contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030. It will contribute to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2 - zero hunger) and to the action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13). It promotes progress towards ending poverty (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). The project will additionally contribute to Agenda 2063 and the Malabo Declaration of the African Union (AU).

The objective is to enable agricultural research and innovation, including extension services, to contribute effectively to food and nutrition security, economic development and climate mitigation in Africa. This will be achieved by improving the capacity, effectiveness and positioning of the Regional and Sub Regional Agriculture research and extension organizations as well as National-Agriculture-Research-Systems, and by promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing among the organizations.

1.2.1 Target Groups

The direct target group comprises the national agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (NAKIS), Ministries of Agriculture (especially departments in charge of strategic planning and policy), the private sector, farmer organizations, extension and advisory services, universities, and NGOs in target countries as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The indirect target groups of the transformation of these agricultural knowledge and innovation systems comprise the rural poor comprising smallholder farmers, women and youth agripreneurs and pastoralists, as well as other marginalized communities.

1.2.2 Expected Outputs

Output 1: Capacities of ASARECA and partner organizations strengthened in competencies required for the successful implementation of the Project such as technical and organizational capacities in coordination, multi-stakeholder project management, resource mobilization, fiduciary processes, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

Output 2: Multi-stakeholder partnerships for innovation established and in operation.

Output 3: Policies in support of climate-relevant agriculture and food systems transformation formulated, investments increased, advocacy and market linkages strengthened.

Output 4: Knowledge management (KM) and communication systems for decision-making and sharing of innovation and for advocacy related to climate-relevant agriculture transformation established.

Output5: Planning, coordination, Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and reporting within ASARECA and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems (NARES) as well as within sub-regional organizations (SROs), AFAAS, FARA and other multi-stakeholder partners, thus minimizing existent weaknesses.

1.2.3 Expected Outcome

The expected outcome of the project is an effective African agricultural research knowledge and innovation system, demand-driven public policies on agricultural research and extension services, and enhanced knowledge sharing and technology development for climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture and food systems.

For the above outputs and outcome to be achieved, partnering organizations have agreed that capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, and South-South, South-North and South-South-North partnerships are necessary. To effectively undertake capacity strengthening, there is a need to assess the existing capacity gaps at individual, organizational and system levels.

1.3 ASARECA's Mandate and Strategy 2019-2028

ASARECA's new strategy and results framework 2019-2028 has rebranded and strategically repositioned ASARECA to perform a higher level facilitative, supportive, coordination, convening, partnership brokerage, communication and advocacy role to enhance participatory visioning and action for sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA sub-region, and to deliver specific development outcomes and impact. This clearly summarizes the nature of role of ASARECA regarding member countries and organizations.

In the new strategy ASARECA selected four areas of focus to which corresponded the flagship program CAADP-XP4 outputs, thus ensuring that organizational efforts are strengthened and focused in one direction. The four areas of focus of ASARECA are expressed as:

1. Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration: Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub-region.
2. Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations: Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations, and management practices.
3. Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions: Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.
4. Knowledge and Information Management: Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision making and action.

1.4 Rationale and Scope of the Assessment

In support of ASARECA mandate and objectives of the new strategy and in implementation of Output 1.1 of CAADP-XP4, a capacity gap assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country level partners has been undertaken, to generate a regional synthesis report of the assessment, and to develop a comprehensive compliance and capacity strengthening (CCCS) plan for ASARECA that will enable the effective and efficient implementation of ASARECA's new strategy and CAADP-XP4 Program by all involved partners at the regional and national level. (Annex 1 describes the tasks carried out to fulfill the rationale and scope of the assessment).

1.5 CGA and CCCS Theory of Change

The following Theory of Change explains why this assignment of capacity gap assessment is important and what changes and impact could result from the CGA and the development and implementation of the CCCSP. The Theory of Change is based on the strategic goals of ASARECA, and the expected outputs and outcome of CAADP-XP4Program.The following diagram illustrates the CGA and CCCSP Theory of Change.

CGA Theory of Change

Outcomes
- Effective African agri-research knowledge and innovation systems;
- Demand driven climate relevant public policies on agriculture research & innovation and extension services;
- Region wide collective actions to combat climate impact
- Enhanced knowledge sharing and technology development; for climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture and food systems.

| Countries better supported in mainstreaming climate relevant innovations | Policies formulated, harmonized, regional trade strengthened & investments increased | Partnerships harnessed, cross-border climate-relevant collaborative actions enhanced | Knowledge management systems encourage production and exchange of STI | MEL ensures timely and quality meeting of targets |

Capacity Strengthened

02

Methodological Approach

2.1 Introduction and Selection of the Approach

The selected assessment approach aimed at enabling capacity gap assessment of; i) the Secretariat, ii) the Board of Directors in its support of the Secretariat, iii) the selected partners at the regional level, and iv) the selected partners at member states level. The approach used tailored data collection tools, and data analysis and synthesis to reach recommendations for capacity strengthening, and to consequently develop a CCCSP.

The methodological approach followed a "system approach", based on the widely used theories of system analysis and development such as those developed and used by Nadler and Tuschman[1] (explained below), Peter Senge[2], and more recently by Richard Swanson[3]. The selected System Approach –combined together with the Nadler Tuschman Congruence Model for Organizational Assessment and Development, theFAO/TAP Common Framework for Capacity Development for Agricultural and Innovation Systems (CDAIS), the CDAIS 3 capacity dimensions' model, and the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment tool (OCA). The development of this one comprehensive assessment approach was guided by CAADP-XP4 outputs and ASARECA strategic goals. This approach was deemed best fitted to achieve the goals of the assignment. (Annex 2 describe approaches that have been combined to form the comprehensive system approach)

2.2 The Combined Approach of CGA

The assessment approach suggested and used combined-as mentioned- the TAP/CDAIS functional capacities represented in the 3 capacity dimensions, USAID OCA 7 organizational capacities and the Nadler-Tuschman Congruence Model. By basing the capacity gap assessment on **more than one model of assessment**, the exercise combined the strengths of the different models, and thus a wider range of capacities and partners that are relevant to the goals and objectives of the organization and of CAADP-XP4 Program were assessed.

The interview and online-survey focus areas and questions have borrowed from and reflected the multitude of assessment areas of the above-mentioned models. The following graph illustrates how the different models have been integrated to form the basis for the assessment, for designing the surveys and interviews and for identifying the gaps. This same approach will be used in the development of a strategy to address the gap and improve organizational performance.

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1 Nadler, D & Tushman, M. A model for diagnosing organizations. Organizational Dynamics Volume 9, Issue 2, Autumn 1980, Pages 35-51

2 Senge, P. & al (1994). The fifth discipline field book: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization. Elsevier.

3 Swanson, R (2005). Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. San Francisco

The Suggested Combined CGA Approach

Callouts show how CDAIS 5 capacities, Agrinatura team 3domains, USAID OCA 7 areas, and Nadler-Tushman model interact to provide a tailored tool of capacity gap assessment relevant to the assignment. What is important here is to ensure congruency among all elements, and between the elements and the goals of the organization, the targeted outputs and the environment, while maintaining continuous feedback. When we successfully identify gaps resulting from the lack of congruence (fit) or cohesion among the inputs, outputs, and processes, we can develop an effective capacity strengthening plan.

As stated earlier, the content of the different elements of the combined model aim to identify existing gaps and address them in order to deliver on the broader institutional mandateof ASARECA, its new strategy and CAADP-XP4 outputs.

The competencies and skills that have been assessed then included but were not limited to organizational capacities to position ASARECA in the region and promote STI for climate relevant agricultural transformation; the technical and functional capacities of organizational staff; capacity to establish successful partnerships; capacity to analyse, formulate and influence policy making, markets and change; capacity to mobilize resources; capacity for knowledge sharing and knowledge management and communication, and capacity for documenting and MEL.

These same identified capacities – among others – have been used for the CGA at the Secretariat level, but also at the regional and national partners level.

2.3 Data Sources, Data Collection, and Process Description

This holistic system approach used inductive exploratory research, looking at primary and secondary data collected through the following tools: document review and analysis (to gain in-depth understandings of the vision, mission and goals of the organizations and of CAADP-XP4 and the current and targeted capacities); semi-structured focus group as well as individual interviews (to get input from Secretariat team and Board members on the current capacities of ASARECA as opposed to the targeted capacities and performance); and online surveys (to collect characteristics of the capacity gaps from a wider population of partners at the global, regional and national levels, as well as from donors, and other organizational diverse stakeholders).

In more details, the data collection tools included:

2.3.1 Document Review
Annex 3 lists the documents reviewed for the purpose of this assignment.

Based onthe document review, and considering the comprehensive assessment approach described above, the interview population and interview methodology and Online Survey population and methodology, were agreed upon.

2.3.2 Interviews
Interviews took place with all Board members and Secretariat staff. Interviews were held online, using the Zoom Platform. Interview sessions included a pre-interview online poll of 20 questions for the Board interview, and 60 questions for the Secretariat interview. At the start of the interview session, the participants responded to the poll survey and then participated in a discussion of the questions of the survey and the gaps that were revealed through responses. Annex 4 explains the interview procedure in detail. Annex 5 is a copy of the Board pre-interview poll survey and Annex 6 is a copy of the Secretariat pre-interview poll survey.

2.3.3 Online Surveys
Online surveys were developed and sent out to Regional and National Partners, diversified stakeholders, and major donors of ASARECA.The online survey to the Regional and National Partners had forty-two (42) questions with a four-point measure of quality rating scale (ranging from 1 to 4 and a possibility of NA for not applicable). The Survey had two parts:

Part 1: Assessed the level of satisfaction of the stakeholders of each of the multiple support areas that are provided by ASARECA.

Part 2: Assessed the stakeholders' functional and technical capacities to identify the gaps in support of developing a plan to address these gaps.Annex 7 is a copy of the Regional and national partners CGA Survey.

The Donors' Survey had eighteen (18) questionsand focused on assessing the performance of ASARECA on main areas described above, from the point of view of the donors. Annex 8 is a copy of the Donors' Survey.

2.3.4 Measures taken to ensure the Success of Data Collection
- Agreement on the process, the tools, and the questions, was reached in a timely manner.
- Information and invitation letters to interviewees were sent out on time, for the interviewees to schedule the needed time and ensure participation.
- Information and notification about the date of the online posting of the survey, and an invitation to participate with guidelines was sent out to respondents to understand the process and its importance, and be ready to respond as soon as the survey was posted online.
- Translation of the questions into French and forwarding them to French speaking partners to ensure their participation in the data collection process.

2.4 Assessment Population
It was agreed to include all Board members and Secretariat staff in the focus group interviews that these categories. Thus, sampling was not applied to the Board and Secretariat populations. There was no sampling applied in selecting the countries to be included in the CGA as the Secretariat recommended to include all countries that

are members of ASARECA. Convenient sampling was applied in selecting organizations to receive the Survey from each country in a way to ensure that these organizations represented all the sectors that collaborate or that use the services of ASARECA. Convenient sampling was also used in selecting the donors that received the donors' Survey, and the participating regional partners. Fifty (50) regional and national-level partners have participated in the CGA of ASARECA, in addition to eighteen(18) members of 12 funding agencies.

2.5 Data Collection Framework

The Consultant has developed the Data Collection Framework (Annex 2). Theframework outlined the main domains and elementsto be assessed, in accordance with the "holistic combined assessment approach", the main questions toask under each area,the population of respondents by question, and the data collection tool for each question.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data collected has been analysed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis approaches. Qualitative analysis was used to analyse data from open-ended questions in the semi-structured interviews, and from document reviews to understand experiences. Quantitative analysis was used to understand frequencies from close-ended questions in the survey and the interview online polls. The Zoom Platform and the LimeSurvey Platform have been used to conduct the polls and the online Survey respectively and to produce analysis of the entered data.

In general, the assessed organizational capacities included: governance, leadership, investment in staff, organizational culture includingorganizational behaviour, information sharing and joint reflection and learning and team dynamics;Secretariat competencies (in light of the tasks required for CAADP-XP4), human resources management,, gender and youth mainstreaming, fiduciary processes and financial management, resource mobilization and diversification, infrastructure, communications and information management, knowledge management, policies and procedures, programme performance, brokering partnerships, policy analysis and formulation and monitoring, evaluation and learning systems, among others. Similar capacities or regional and national partners have beenassessed in as far as they relate to the successful implementation of the five outputs of CAADP-XP4.

2.7 Data Synthesis and Reporting

Following the data analysis phase, the findings have been synthesized based on areas of assessment, and within each area of assessment the contribution of each population of respondents. Graphics, diagrams, tables, and other illustrative forms have beenbuilt as will be shown in the following section. The following sections thus include findings from the CGAs regarding organizational and individual technical and functional capacity areas, and recommendations for addressing these gaps with suggested timelines.

03

Findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment of ASARECA and its Partners

Following are the findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment of ASARECA and its Regional and National Partners. As explained in the methodology, the findings were based on document analysis, pre-interview poll of Board and Secretariat, semi-structured focus group interviews, individual interviews, online surveys sent to global, regional and national partners and donors, and direct correspondence with the Consultant.

The following graphs illustrated the results of the pre-interview polls for Board and Secretariat. The same 4-point rating scale used in the pre-interview online polls was used in the online surveys. The 4-point scale key is described in the following:

1 = Unsatisfactory   2 = Needs improvement
3 = Satisfactory 4 = Highly satisfactory
NA = Not Applicable

3.1 Findings of the pre-interview poll with ASARECA Board and Secretariat

3.1.1 Findings of the pre-interview poll with ASARECA Board
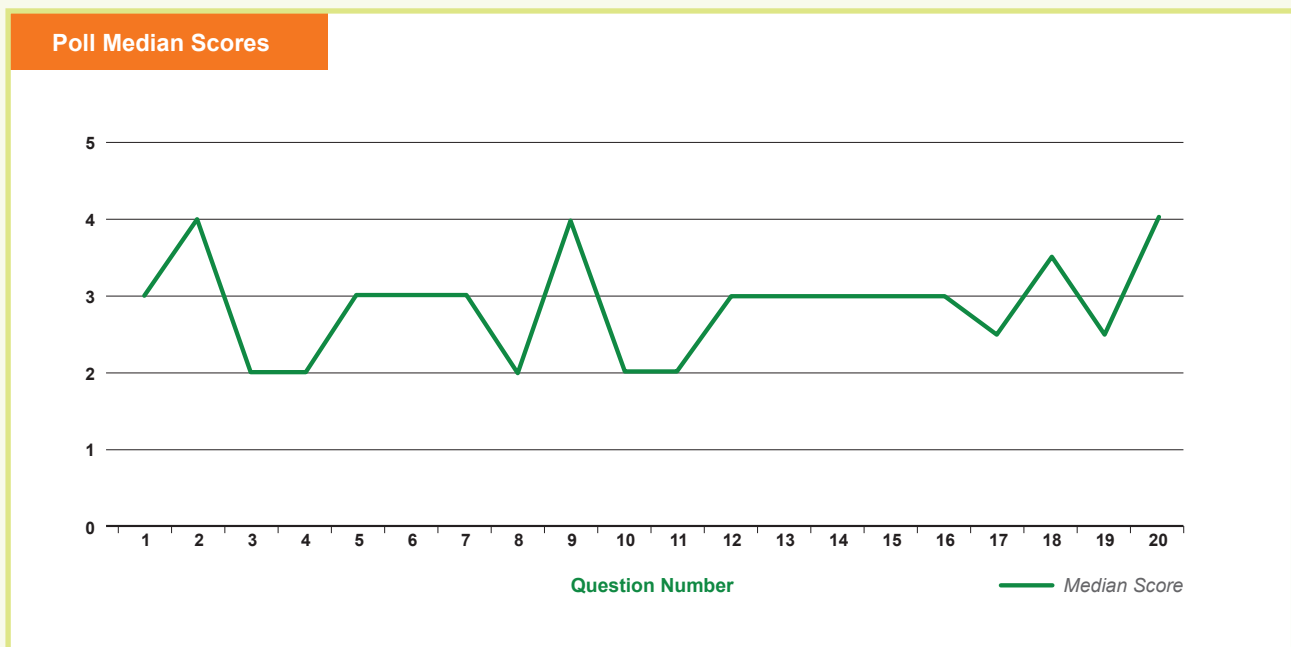

Poll Median Scores

Figure 1: ASARECA Board Poll Median Scores

As stated, the pre-interview polls were used to identify capacity gap areas through asking the interview participants to answer the online poll by allocating a score to each question from 1 to 4 (as explained above). Discussions during the interview then focused on the questions that were allocated scores of 1 or 2 out of 4. The following is a description of the gaps revealed from these discussions of the low scored questions.

Board interview low-scored questions, comments, and explanation

For Board interview, these questions that scored low formed 35% of the total number of questions. The above graph shows the median score for each question, based on Board member responses. The low scored questions were questions number: 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 17 and 19 (Please check the list of Board Interview Questions, attached).

Explanations and comments by Board members on low scored questions

The following comments were compiled with regard to these domain questions through the focus group interviewwith all Board members, individual interviews with selected Board members, the online public zoom chat, the online private zoom chat, and the emailed interview questionnaire responses. Board members have also provided thoughtful and constructive recommendations to address the gaps revealed through the online poll, the interviews, and follow-ups. These recommendations have been incorporated into the recommendation section of this CGA report and will surely input the development of the CCCS Plan. Comments are provided below by domain of assessment, mainly fitting into ASARECA'scapacity to organize and relate.

a. Recognition of ASARECA at the regional and country-level, and the level of support that ASARECA is getting from its external environment

Board membersprovided the following explanation for the lowscoring onthe level of recognition at the regional and country level. It was explained that regional and sub-regional organizations - like ASARECA -usually assume the difficult role of bringing diverse parties together for collective actions or exchanges, they do not have the authority to get things done through these parties, and thus their role and actions may not get due recognition by those involved. Also, ASARECA may not be communicating with all the right potential partners within a country. For example, in certain countries there is separation between government offices/ministries handling the different aspects of ASARECA's mandate. Thus, when ASARECA limits its contact in a country to one office or ministry, it risks not being known or recognized by other national offices that could also be potential partners.

b. Level of Board participation in major actions of ASARECA, i.e. mobilizing resources, increasing visibility, and building partnerships

Comments and explanations of lowscoring in this area explained that a main reason may be that, previously, the Board was not as diverse as it is now.Thus, the ability of the Board to promote ASARECA in diverse set-ups and with different partners at the country and regional levelto increase the visibility of ASARECA, develop new partnerships, and mobilize resources, may have been limited. Also, Board members explained that previously and even when the Board wished to support the Secretariat, there were no roadmaps identifying specific roles for the Board. Now, ASARECA has its Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy, and its Communication Strategy which detail actions to be taken by Board membersand provide tools to use in resource mobilization and in increasing visibility.

c. Level of success of ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation

In responding to the low median score for the question on the level of success of ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation, the Board explained that though ASARECA is well-positioned to promote agricultural technology and innovation, yet it lacks the human, financial resources and systems needed for this consuming task. As per Board members, once these resources are available, including the new Knowledge Management system and strategy, ASARECA can progress in carrying out this core role.

d. Level of success of ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming

Board members explained that the new strategy of ASARECA revived ASARECA's focus on gender and youth mainstreaming through its programs and projects. Still, ASARECA does not have specialised gender staff to promote gender & youth mainstreaming among its partners.

Also, previously, ASARECA did not have the channels (programs) to promote gender & youth mainstreaming among its partners. CAADP-XP4 opens a channel to review ASARECA's strategy on gender and youth mainstreaming, and to include this component in its current programs with partners.

e. Availability and multiplicity of channels to sense the regional and national priorities

ASARECA Secretariat staff are limited in number and they do not have the diverse channels needed for comprehensive sensing of the regional and national priorities. Board members expressed readiness to help with that, but also urged the finalization of ASARECA's communication strategy and the development of these institutionalized channels of communications. Further recommendations in this domain are detailed in the Recommendations section of this report.

f. Resource mobilization and diversification of sources of funding

Without a plan and road map it was previously difficult to ensure continuous diversification of funding sources. According to the Board, right now, there is a Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy that will enable the diversification of resources both in number but also in type of funding agencies.

The above was a description of the domains of capacity of ASARECA that has been identified by the Board members as needing improvement. The remaining assessment domains that were not mentioned as gaps in the descriptions above, received scores of 3 and 4, thus not revealing serious gaps that need to be addressed. These domains that were scored as satisfactory or exceeding expectations included the level of Board familiarity with the goals and objectives of ASARECA; Board members' satisfaction that these goals support the regional needs and that they guide the work of ASARECA with its partners; the representation of the Board of multiple sectors and countries; the level at which the Board is familiar with the internal policies and procedures of ASARECA ; the level of ASARECA's adaptability to changes in its environment; the rest of ASARECA's internal processes and systems that are not mentioned as gaps above; and the pertinence of its new resource mobilisation and sustainability plan to its new strategy(Annex xxxx???).

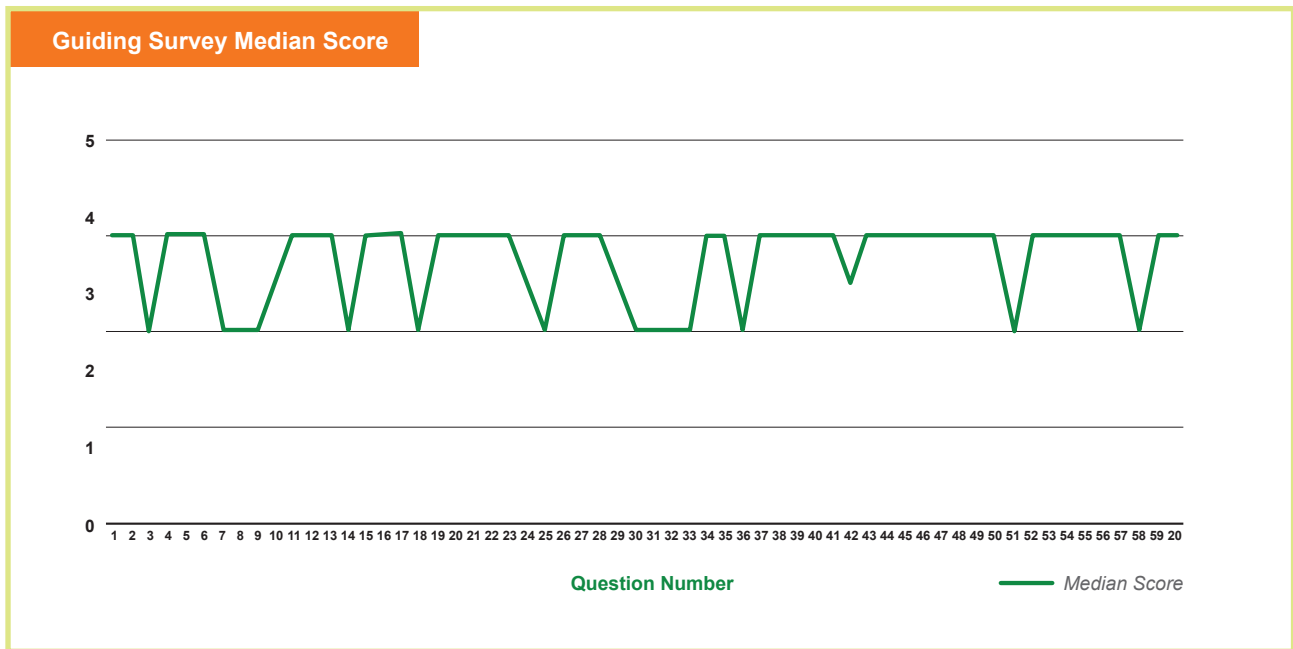## 3.1.2 Findings of the pre-interview poll with ASARECA Secretariat

Guiding Survey Median Score

Question Number — Median Score

Figure 2: ASARECA Secretariat Poll Median Scores

Secretariat interview low-scored questions, comments, and explanations

The Secretariat interview had 60 questions, thus triple the number of questions for the Board. The reason was that the assessment of the Secretariat probed further into the capacity domain to "Deliver" including specific individual technical and functional capacities needed to implement the strategy of ASARECA. The Secretariat interviewing process also assessed organizational systems and structures and culture and work environment, following the comprehensive combined model of assessment that the Consultant has adopted. For the Secretariat, the low scored questions formed 36.6% of the total number of questions (almost equivalent to the percentage of questions scored low by the Board. These Secretariat low scored questions were questions number 3, 7, 8, 9,, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 42, 46, 51 and 58(Annex 7).

Explanations and comments by Secretariat members on low scored questions

The following comments were compiled with regard to these domain questions through the focus group interview of all Secretariat members, the individual interviews with selected Secretariat members, the online public zoom chat, the online private zoom chat, and the emailed interview questionnaire responses. Similarto the Board, Secretariat members have also provided thoughtful and constructive recommendations to address the gaps revealed through the online poll, the interviews, and follow-ups. These recommendations have been incorporated into the recommendation section of this CGA report and will surely input the development of the CCCS Plan. Comments are provided below by domain of assessment, mainly fitting into ASARECA Capacity to deliver and relate, with some important contributions to the capacity to organize. It was interesting to notice that the Secretariat and the Board both rated low the level of recognition of ASARECA in the region, the participation of the Board in increasing visibility and resources of ASARECA and the role of ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming.

CAPACITY TO ORGANIZE

a. ASARECAs Positioningand Governance

b. Recognition of ASARECA at the regional and country-level, and the level of support that ASARECA is getting from the external environment

Similar to the Board, the Secretariat found that recognition of ASARECA at the regional and country-level needed improvement. Still, explanation was provided to why the scoring was low in this positioning domain. Interviewed members of the Secretariat explained that that this issue was linked to the recent history of ASARECA, and the transition period ASARECA lived for few years. During these years of transition, ASARECA had limited presence and engagement in the region, with little projects on the ground. This resulted into "disconnection with its base" for some period.Yet, ASARECA has now completed its reform process, and has started an engagement process through its flagship program, CAADP-XP4. It is planned that in the coming few years, more engagement will take place through more partnerships and projects on the ground, a regional knowledge management system, and better involvement in policy dialogue, analysis, formulation, and impact.This should lead to better positioning of ASARECA among its regional and country-level partners, and accordingly better recognition from the partners.

c. Promoting technology and supporting regional development: gender mainstreaming

While scores given by staff to the success of ASARECA in promoting technology and innovation indicated that its level of capacities in this area was satisfactory, the Secretariat members emphasized that gender mainstreaming interventions of ASARECA were not up to expectations. The explanation provided was that ASARECA did not have the channels needed to promote gender and youth mainstreaming;"ASARECA currently has one main program – CAADP-XP4 and this program is not strong on gender and youth mainstreaming". However, Secretariat members suggested that this program could still be the start of promoting gender and youth mainstreaming to partners, and also to the Secretariat of ASARECA. This effort could then be strengthened,"once new programs are introduced at regional and country-level".

d. Board representation and participation

According to Secretariat members, ASARECA has just "reconstituted" its Board with diverse representation of AIS actors to allow for better feedback to the Secretariat, incorporation of partners' perspectives, better reach to partners for dissemination of learning, and resource mobilisation. It is expected that as the new Board goes forward,the Secretariat will get more support from the Board. It was stated that new Board members understood their role of oversight, strategic guidance, and support to ASARECA and that they had already started to get involved in brokering partnershipsand increasing visibility of ASARECA among its diverse partners.Board members were also seen by the Secretariat as "willing to assume their roles" in the implementation of the new Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy. The low score was because the newly reconstituted Board "have not achieved witnessed results yet".

e. Organizational Leadership, investment in staff and organizational culture

Scores allocated by Secretariat staff to questions on organizational leadership, investment in staff and organizational culture showedgaps from the point of view of the respondents concerningthe level of staff involvement in planning and decision making; the level of encouragement that staff receive to initiate and take risks; the level of progress of ASARECA towards becoming a learning organization; and the organizational culture on collaboration.

Staff who had concerns about the above elements explained duringindividual interviews that,as ASARECA was undergoing witnessed reforms and changes, a level of conflicts arose among some staff that may negatively impact the current efforts to build a culture of collaboration within the Secretariat. These conflicts seemed to be fed by a difference in perception about the nature of change occurring in ASARECA. While the newly arriving staff of ASARECA saw the change as transformational, overhauling systems, structures and cultures; the staff who accompanied ASARECA through its ups and downs in the last decade or before, saw the change as developmental, building upon prior sound experience and aiming to introduce improvements to increase efficiencies. This difference of conception may have also been the reason forother gaps that the staff described such as the littlesharing of information among staff in different functions, and the little opportunities for joint learning. It became clear that reconciliation of these differences was a request of the responding members of the Secretariat.

Also, in responses to questions about the level ofinvestment in staff professional development and growth plans, Secretariat staff explained that staff capacity development plans were addressed through the performance evaluation process where discussions between staff and supervisors resulted in identification of certain needs for capacity development. This process wasdescribed as "incomplete" by staff members who expressed that they looked forward to having an HR function with up-to-date approaches and tools to conducta comprehensive HR analysis and developan integrated plan of ASARECA'shuman resources. This HR function, according to the responding staff members will alsobenchmark compensation packages, and institutionalize processes for team building, conflict resolution, staff motivationand participatory decision-making.

CAPACITY TO DELIVER

a. Organizational Systems and Staff Technical Skills: Financial management, procurement, and HR

The low-scored questions- and following discussions- regarding organizational systems and staff technical skills focused on the FinancialSystem, the Human ResourcesSystem, and staff skills to support ASARECA's mandate. The gap in understanding the operating policies and procedures,and the level at which MEL and Knowledge Management Systems were put into action also appeared in this area of assessment. The multiple "Not applicable – NA answers" to questions on Finance and MEL – when probed – showed a need to improved sharing of information among departments.

Secretariat staff established that though the financial system is adequately computerised, there was still a need to link the financial system to the results areas of "ASARECA's strategy implementation plan". Once this is done, the financial system should be ableto issue reports on expenses of MEL, capacity development, partnerships, communications, and resource mobilization activities, which will increase the level of alignment between the system, the organizational strategy and CAADP-XP4. This will also support the accuracy of reporting on incoming funds and projections of expenditures. A need of non-finance staff to be included while designing this modification of the Finance System has been expressed, as a way to allow for reflection and learning.

Staff also stated that policies and procedures of ASARECA – including finance, procurement and HR policies and procedures –were available in big manuals that were difficult to understand and that required long hours of reading that were not available to staff. This had resulted in lack of knowledge of these policies and procedures among staff, which reflected on their capacity to apply these policies in their daily activities.

Secretariat reiterated in this area of assessment the expressed need for Human Resources Development (HRD)

professionals capable of participating in strategic planning and management to achieve the goals of the organization and to support the professional growth of the staff. Staff described this gap as one that needed immediate attention from the management.

b. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System

As for the MEL system, staff expressed their insufficient knowledge of the status of MEL system and the level of its readiness to produce and share strategic and program relevant reports with Secretariat and partners.

Technical staff of the Secretariat explained that ASARECA did in fact have a MEL system that was being further improved into a Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) system; "there is currently a consultant working with the technical staff on this development." According to the Secretariat Management and Staff, the current system reflected systems thinking, aligned with the new strategy of ASARECA and with CAADP-XP4 and was also capable of accommodatingincoming programs. It was further explained that therewere plans to further upgrade the system to include certain configurations such as GIS, and also plans to complete the results framework (mainly indicators) of the 5-year operational plan of ASARECA and then to include these indicators into the MEL system so that the system be fully aligned not only with the new ASARECA strategy, but also with its operational plan. The Management of ASARECA together with the technical staff were also considering linking the MEL System to the Financial System so that MEL reportswould include expenditures by result areas. Also, part of the plan explained was that the system would produce MEL reports on country's technical contributions to ASARECA's activities and programs.

Despite the ambitious plan, the capacity gap of the MEL system as identified by the Secretariat staffwas due to the fact that the system had not yet been used to its full capacity, i.e. feeding the system with data and ensuring that all ASARECA reports depended on system generated information. This was mainly due to the break in activities that ASARECA experienced during its transition period. During this period, there were no projects on the ground and thus no data to feed the MEL system. Now that ASARECA's activities were restarting and with the new strategy, operational plans and CAADP-XP4 program, data should be available and would be fed to the system. This should also address the low score given to the MEL system as a tool for learning and reflection. According to ASARECA technical team, once enough data was fed to the system, progress reports may be produced and used for learning, reflection, and further development.

The issue remains that staff expressed their lack of information about the MEL system and the current use and progress of the system; an issue that certainly requires handling, despite the busy schedule of the MEL technical staff.

c. Knowledge Management

ASARECA developed a "Knowledge Information (KI) Hub in 2016 linked to a Knowledge Information and Management Strategy that was also developed at the time. It is now a strong demand by the Board that ASARECA focuses on its role in knowledge sharing and dissemination and that it positions itself as the Regional Knowledge and Information Hub." As explained by ASARECA Management, ASARECA has been on a quest to revive this Knowledge Management System through hiring consultants to redesign the system in a way to include more than data base, and to also review ASARECA Knowledge Management Strategy. The current system before redesigning is available through the website of ASARECA and is seen as being heavily accessed by partners. Yet, it documents only less than half the technologies that have been developed through ASARECA supported programs in the last decade.

ASARECA Management explained that the completed KI Hub has been designed to be a learning and innovation think tank for generating, documenting and exchanging knowledge, developing new AR4D concepts and policies, networking, and facilitating learning to strengthen the capacities of ASARECA stakeholders, and influence agricultural related policies and decisions.

The development and populating of the Knowledge and Information Hub is linked to another current project of ASARECA which aims to develop an electronic filing and document managementsystem. ASARECA has knowledge products that are not yet digitized and thus cannot be uploaded to its Knowledge and Information System/Hub. According to the Knowledge Management staff, there is a plan to digitize these files by the end of the year 2020. ASARECA has also a plan to profile knowledge products that exist in the member countries under easy retrievable references, towards a comprehensive regional KI Hub. Engagement with member countries has started regarding joint generation, development, storing and dissemination of knowledge and information.

d. Staff Functional Skills

Questions on staff functional skills have includedfunctional capacity areas such as collaboration, engaging in strategic processes, evidence-based advocacy, facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms, brokering partnerships, and mobilizing resources. Low scores have been allocated to the capacity to mobilize partners for evidence-based advocacy,the capacity for policy formulation, and the capacity to engage in strategic processes to influence policy decision-making. The capacity for brokering partnerships has received satisfactory rating.

Secretariat members explained that the low-scoring on the mentionedfunctional skills was due to a need for capacity strengthening in policy advocacy and policy formulation and to learnfrom expert experiences in this domain. Secretariat members also expressed that though they scored brokering partnership as satisfactory there was a need foracquiring new mechanisms and tools of brokering partnerships.According to the Secretariat staff, as ASARECA continued its progress inengaging with regional and national partners, the areas of brokeringpartnerships and impacting policies shouldshow higher levels of success. Staff expressed the need for a new partnership strategy for ASARECA thatwould supply them with mechanisms and tools for brokering partnerships and that would serve as a learning and reflecting document for the staff. They further explained that the process of engaging new partners had risks and boundaries, and that the partnership strategy couldroll out a secured engagement process. A need for capacity strengthening in strategic and system thinking, and communication was also expressed to enable staff to participate and coordinate policy advocacy, resource mobilization and communicating the role of ASARECA in the region.

f. Policy Analysis and Formulation

Secretariat staff working on policy formulation explained that until recently there have been a few projects in ASARECA, and thus there were not many channels to go through to engage with partners and to formulate and influence policies. Staff explained that, the activities on policy formulation and influencing had commenced through the CAADP-XP4project and more stakeholders should be engaged in key policy processes. Staff asserted that in the recent past ASARECA had a lead in regional harmonization of seed trade regulations and standards, developing policy guides and procedures at the regional and country level, andthere is an intention to resume these activities through the CAADP-XP4, and other projects.

This year, staff in this function organized dialogues on inclusion of climate-relevant Science,Technology, and Innovation (STI) indicators in National Agriculture Investment Plans for directors and commissioners in charge or agricultural policy.They then designed a plan to review draft National Agriculture Investment Plans prepared by the countries to ensure that climaterelevant STI indicators are incorporated. Staff have also been planning a

regional policy dialogue on cross border trade in agricultural commodities and inputs, and published an article online in the ASARECA Newsletter: "The triple tragedy of COVID-19, climate change and food insecurity: Policy responses in Africa". Finally, staff informed that they had started planning training programs for national and regional partners on policy analysis and formulation.

CAPACITY TO RELATE

a. Channels of Feedback

Interviewees expressed that multiple informal channels of feedback existed in ASARECA, as feedback may come directly to the Management of ASARECA from the NARSor come to a member of the Secretariat from a contact in NARS or through the country-level focal points. Yet, these bilateral informal feedback channels were not institutionalized in a way toallow for documentation of communication for reflection, learning and planning purposes. Secretariat staff explained that other than these bilateral communications as source of feedback, ASARECA uses its social media to communicate with its partners, sense their needs and receive feedback of its actions. These social media are twitter and LinkedIn, in addition to ASARECA's webpage.

Staff explained that whilethe system recorded the number of interactions on social media, there was no documentation of the feedback received or the needed action to respond to such feedback.Staff also asserted that while the feedback was not monitored accurately, yet there was evidence that ASARECA received feedback from countries. Still, there was no record of actions taken to respond to the received feedback.

b. ASARECA's Communication System

As mentioned earlier, during ASARECA's transition period, ASARECA did not have projects on the ground and thus its communication with partners and visibility was negatively affected. Secretariat's Communication team explained that this situation was being changed as a Communication Strategy was being finalized to ensure establishing multiple channels of communication and feedback with the national and regional partners. Throughout the year 2020, the Communication staff have worked on multiple tasks to improve ASARECA's communication tools and documentation systems. These tasks included: developing a Joint Visibility Strategy for CAADP-XP4, developing and implementing media engagement and communication visibility plan for the CAADP-XP4; branding ASARECA for enhanced visibility; regularly updating the website and integrating social media in the marketing plan of ASARECA; developing ASARECA mailing list and online newsletter; ensuring close engagement with mass media and partners for enhanced visibility of ASARECA and maintaining regular contact with media houses providing them with timely news about ASARECA.

3.2 Recommendations and action items for Organizational and Secretariat Capacity Strengthening

The following recommendations have mainly resulted from multiple rich data sources including detailed document analysis; organizational and individual self assessment surveys; semi-structured focus group interviews that allowed for reflection and mutual learning; selected individual interviews with iterative processes that allowed for the development of recommendations; and individual expression of concerns through private correspondences. Additional recommendations were added based on expertise to finally provide the following set of recommendations. These recommendations solely address gap areas revealed through the CGA multiple tools, and do not cover functions or domains of capacities where no gap has been identified. The recommendationsare presented in the order of the Assessment Framework, which is built on the adopted holistic assessment approach combining the Nadler-Tuchman congruency model, CDAIS 4+1 capacities and 3 domains, and the USAID OCA tool.

The recommendations mainly focused on the positioning and governance of ASARECA; leadership and institutional management and culture; the necessity to complete the systems and strategies being developed, and to adequately staff the existing and added functions of ASARECA, and to provide the existing staff with the needed technical and functional skills in a way to maximize performance and achieve the goals of the organization and of CAADP-XP4.Due to the multiplicity of the following recommendations, it is recommended that ASARECA prioritise its functions and thus prioritise among these recommendations and start with the most relevant and important to achieving the Strategy.

3.2.1 Capacity to Govern: Positioning ASARECA: Improving External Environment Recognition

1. Use ASARECA's flagship programs as a channel to increase engagement with partners at the regional and country levels. This improved engagement with diverse stakeholders, will also improve the recognition of ASARECA's role at both levels.

2. Speed the implementation of the new ASARECA Strategy 2019-2028and strengthen the efforts ofmobilizing resources, brokering partnerships, sharing knowledge, communicating and being visible, and developing staff and partner capacities.

3. Communicate and learn from the experienceof regional network in different parts of the worldon how they got recognizedwithout being in a position to direct the actions of their partners. Networks – in general – have this big challenge of needing to get things done through partners on which they have no authority. Thus, exchange of experience with similar regional networks is vitally important in this regard.

4. Continue the regular meetings with partners from NARS, Ministers of Agriculture, and national and regional level partners from different sectors, to share knowledge, updates on activities and to promote collective actions related to ASARECA objectives.

5. Widen the scope of contact of ASARECA at the country level to include – in addition to the current partners – other partners that may be identified as handling issues under ASARECA's mandate.

3.2.2 Capacity to Govern: Governance and Improving the Participation of ASARECA'sBoard

1. Build on the existing diversity of the Board – representing all societal sectors – to reach out to these sectors through members of the Board and disseminate information on ASARECA, suggesting potential partnerships, and mobilizing additional resources.

2. Speed the collaboration of Members of the Board in implementing the new Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy (RMSS) of ASARECA.Use the roadmap for branding the institution and improve its corporate image.

3. FinalizeASARECA's Communication Strategy and its implementation planin order to provide diversifiedtools to the Board and Secretariat to communicate withglobal, regional, and national partners, in order to increase the visibility of ASARECA, promote its strategy and secure additional funding opportunities.

4. Design and adoptdiverse channels to strengthen the capacity of Board members in resource mobilization. These channels may include special orientation sessions, participating in proposal preparation or participating in joint resource mobilization activities. Also, continue to periodically orient the new Board on ASARECA's constitution and value proposition, to enable them to support and promote the role of ASARECA in the Region.

5. Further engage Board members with the projects and programs of ASARECA. In addition to regular meetings, Board members could participate in field visits and receive direct input and updates from partners. Meeting with partners in ASARECA projects could also be organized online. This should assist Board members in assessing the complexities of the projectsandbeing introduced to project multi-sector partners all over the region, and not only in their own country. With this level of engagement, the Board can beenabledto represent ASARECA and its goals of promoting research, innovation, policies, programs, and perspectives that support development in the Region.

6. Further engage Board members in the development of funding proposals, and request Board members to include ASARECA as a partner in their own institutions' proposals for funding.

7. Encourage the Board to promote ASARECA through the different platforms, conferences, meetings, and events at which they participate, and supply them with communication material on ASARECA that they can share with potential members and donors.

8. Involve researchers and human resources of the national organizations in developing proposals to secure funding for shared projectsand encourage and enable countries to collaborate rather than compete for funding.

3.2.3 Capacity to Govern: Positioning ASARECA as a Promoter of Agricultural Technology and Innovation

1. Strengthen and enable the Secretariat staff to play assigned roles in promoting agricultural technology and innovation in collaboration with partners at country and regional level through developing staff capacities for communication, navigating complexity, reflection and learning, evidence-based advocacy, and public influencing.

2. Efficiently manage available funds and mobilize additional resources to achieve the required positioning of ASARECA as promoter of technology and innovation.

3.2.4 Capacity to Govern: Positioning of ASARECA as a Promoter of Gender and Youth Mainstreaming

1. Review, if needed, and put into implementation ASARECA gender and youth mainstreaming strategy.

2. Sensitize & coordinate learning & reflection among ASARECA's Board and Secretariat on gender & youth mainstreaming.

3. Support policy analysis and formulation on gender and youth mainstreaming through CAADP-XP4, and work with regional and country level partners on advocacy and influencing decision making with regard to gender and youth mainstreaming, access to productive resources such as land and finances and other.

4. As ASARECA focuses on innovation and commercialization, there should be consideration of gender and youth mainstreaming in these two aspects, as gender and youth are important players in each. For example, the role of youth and women in transforming raw agricultural products to value-added commercial products to strengthen cross-country trade should be emphasized and promoted.

5. Collaborate with available expertise in partner organizations to co-coordinate activities related to mainstreaming.

3.2.5 Capacity to Govern: Leadership, Investment in Staff, and Organizational Culture

1. Nurture an internal environment of learning & reflecting.

2. Create formal channels for staff to jointly reflect on organizational matters. These formal channels could be management/staff committees; leadership teams; quality circles; organizational learning circles; suggestion boxes or a designated email or online form for suggestions, or online employee feedback surveys.

3. Promote staff development and growth through diverse channels such as technical and functional skills training, coaching, mentoring by senior staff to newcomers, or temporary secondment to partner organizations.

4. Ensure that Staff possess -or acquire- CDAIS functional skills and that they can navigate complexity, collaborate, analyze, and reflect, learn, engage in strategic political processes, and adapt and respond to changing situations and partners' needs. (Please review CDAIS components, in the methodology section).

5. Invest in establishing ASARECA as a learning organization.

6. Develop supervisory staff management skills including strategic planning, project management, team building and management, negotiation, communication, reflection and learning and conflict resolution.

7. Establish and institutionalize a conflict resolution process.

8. Institutionalize team building and team spirit among staff, remembering the following phases of team building:
   - Forming (when all parties are excited of the potential of teaming up);
   - Storming (when after forming the parties realize their different backgrounds, knowledge, motivational aspects, culture and attitude, and start fighting about some or all of these);
   - Norming (is when - or if – the storming parties come to an understanding and acceptance of their differences, and design a roadmap that addresses these differences – this is a hard process and some teams split at this stage); and,
   - Performing (only those who go successfully through the norming stage can then move to successful performing together).

Teams that jump from forming to performing without giving adequate attention to the phases of storming and norming, mostly go back to storming while performing, thus affecting the nature of their performance, and reducing their chances of success.

1. Provide space for members of staff to revisit the core values of ASARECA as outlined in its strategy (inclusivity, accountability, transparency, and Integrity) and ensure they are put into practice through the different processes of ASARECA.

2. Reform and staff the current HR unit to perform a full-fledged HR function, or use available expertise in HR to advise on action and to develop systems and tools described below. The HR unit or contracted expertise willcontribute to the strategic planning of the organization; design needed jobs to fulfill the mandate;develop organizational charts to establish inter-relationships among jobs;advise on recruitment and staffing;advise on staff development and growth plans;design and create a learning organization of ASARECA; develop conflict resolution processes; develop team building approaches; design motivation and compensation schemes; and design a comprehensive performance assessment program; among multiple other HR functions that accompany organizations throughout their transformation process.

3.2.6 Capacity to Deliver: ASARECA Systems and Functions

1. LinkASARECA Finance Systemto the indicators of the Strategy Implementation Plan and the indicators and targeted outputs of CAADP-XP4 to report expenses per indicator or result area.

2. Continuously improve capacities of the Finance department to maximize the use of the computerized integrated Finance System.

3. Simplify the original versions of ASARECA's manuals of policies and procedures into staff-friendly versions that staff may easily refer to for their daily work.

4. Conduct periodical orientation sessions to existing and new staff to refresh their understandings and answer their questions on the different policies and procedures.

5. Implement planned activities related to record management and electronic filing systems, to make policies available on multiple platforms. Develop the capacity of staff in using these electronic filing systems.

6. Develop a plan on Policy Analysis and Formulation and Impacting Agricultural Policy and Decision Making in the Region, as it is one of the components of CAADP-XP4 and an important function of ASARECA. This plan may build on the work already done at the level of policy impacting, coming up with standards, etc. at country and regional levels, and can further details the section on policy analysis and formulation in the current ASARECA Strategy and implementation plan.

7. Develop the capacities of partners in policy analysis and formulation, critical thinking, system thinking, gender analysis, value chain analysis, learning and reflecting, communication and evidence-based advocacy; and establish diverse mechanisms for joint action for policy influencing and advocacy.

8. Focus on harmonizing country-level policies to allow countries to collaborate on projects of mutual interest, and especially, to allow transboundary trade and movement of technology.

9. Finalize the development of the Knowledge Management Strategy and the establishment of the Regional Knowledge and Information Huband prioritize them in budget allocation as they support the positioning of ASARECA in the region.

10. Finalize the Communication and BrandingStrategy with its implementation plan.

11. Develop the capacity of the Secretariat staff to implement the communication strategy through feeding information to the Communication system, each in their area of specialization.

12. Continue and strengthen engagement with – and capacity of - country-level partners to build a regional communication system where information flows in different directions.

13. Complete the process of profiling partners on ASARECA's website to allow for exchange among partners and to strengthen partners' recognition of the value added of ASARECA as convener at regional level.

14. Support the above systems through developing the needed technical capacities of the existing staff and recruiting adequate numbers of staff to carry out these responsibilities.

15. When changes and developments are taking place in one department's functions, it is recommended to orient staff from other departments on these changes to ensure learning and a spirit of inclusion.

3.2.7 Capacity to Deliver: EffectiveStaffing and Staff Capacity Strengthening
Effective staffing and aligning staff capacities to ASARECA Strategy, to the indicators of the operational plan and to CAADP-XP4, is a goal of ASARECA.While the space does not allow for going into full details about effective staffing, the following points which are applicable to organizations undergoing reform and transformation are provided together with a recommendation to consider them. Some of the following steps have already been taken by ASARECA.

Staffing and staff capacity strengthening identification process:
- Based on the organizational mandate, vision, and mission, develop the organizational strategy,and complement it with operational plan, indicators, and milestones
- Analyse each indicator from the point of view of what actions need to be taken, how it will be done, where, when and who is needed to do it (description of the job that will carry out the action(s) related to this indicator
- Develop accurate job descriptions based on the jobs needed per indicator
- Place the job descriptions using their suggested job titles on the organizational organogram
- Develop the relations among jobs on the organogram and fill in the gaps in reporting, etc. to have a complete organogram
- Put names into jobs, using existing human resources
- While putting names into jobs consider the qualifications of your current staff, their capacity strengths, and gaps, and also their career path and talent management and capacity development options
- For better results, conduct Capacity Gap Assessment to Identify capacity development needs to perform the outlined functions (if current personnel will stay in their current jobs but need further capacities, or if they will move into another job and need capacity to carry out the new job, or if new staffing is needed).
- Analyse jobs that cannot be filled by the current staff members, even if they undergo capacity strengthening – these jobs are your vacant jobs.
- Provide feedback to your organogram, making corrections, as necessary.

- Appoint new staff on the vacant jobs – appointing has a wider meaning in this context including tapping into resources in other partner organizations.
- Use evaluation and feedback to improve the above process
- Institutionalize capacity development of staff as a continued process focused on the strengthening of staff technical capacities but also of functional capacities outlined in the section on investment in staff, above.

3.2.8 Capacity to Relate: Communication and diversifying the channels of feedback

1. Further engage the Board in sensing regional and national priorities and communicating them to the Secretariat.

2. Include modalities and diverse tools of sensing regional and national priorities and of getting timely feedback, in ASARECA Communication Strategy.

3. Institutionalize and document the feedback that ASARECA gets through its current informal channels with its partners.

4. Report periodically on partner engagement through ASARECA's social media platforms indicating the type of engagement and ASARECA's response to this engagement.

5. Allocate enough personnel and develop their technical and functional capacities to carry out the above functions as part of their jobs.

6. Develop the capacities of ASARECA's non-communication staff and provide them with the skills related to communication such as evidence production, presentation skills, writing skills and initial marketing skills, in order for them to assume a supportive role with the communication team in increasing the visibility of ASARECA.

3.2.9 Capacity to Deliver and Relate: Partnering, Resource Mobilization and Diversification of Resources

1. Promptly implement the Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy and its implementation plan to provide for effective partnership towards the sustainable diversification of resources.

2. Leverage on CAADP-XP4 and change the landscape of ASARECA to attract more funds. Some components of the CAADP-XP4 Program support resource mobilization, so ASARECA may leverage each opportunity in the program for that purpose.

3. Diversify funding sourcesand target resources that have diverse profile not limiting funding sources to international donors. Other diverse sources of funding could beprivate sector, endowments, regional donors, foundations etc. Thus, the diversification of resources should not only be reflected in increasing the number of donors, but also reaching to donors with diverse profiles.

4. Focus proposal writing on proposals that would provideadditional funding in support of implementing ASARECA planned actionsand minimize proposals that invite a whole set of new actions that distract and burden the staff with additional responsibilities.

5.	Develop a new partnership strategy with mechanisms and implementation framework.

6.	Establish formal channels for brokering partnerships and for resource mobilization and dedicate resources to maintain relationship with donors.

7.	Schedule periodical sessions to reflect on relations with donors, learn and re-plan

8.	Recruit teams that can carry out the above responsibilities.

3.3 Global, Regional, National & Development Partners' Assessment of ASARECA's Contribution to the Region and to their Organizations

Following ASARECA's capacity gap assessment by the Board and Secretariat, and the identification of the gaps and the recommendations to address them, surveys have been distributed to national, regional, global and development partners of ASARECA so that they may assess ASARECA's contribution to the region. Survey population were selected for being familiar with ASARECA's role and activities in the region and because they have previously or are currently partners of ASARECA. Responses to the surveys were 52%. Following are the responses per category of respondents. The assignment also included profiling capacity gaps per partner country. The profiles follow the below analysis of partner responses.

3.3.1 National Partners' Responses
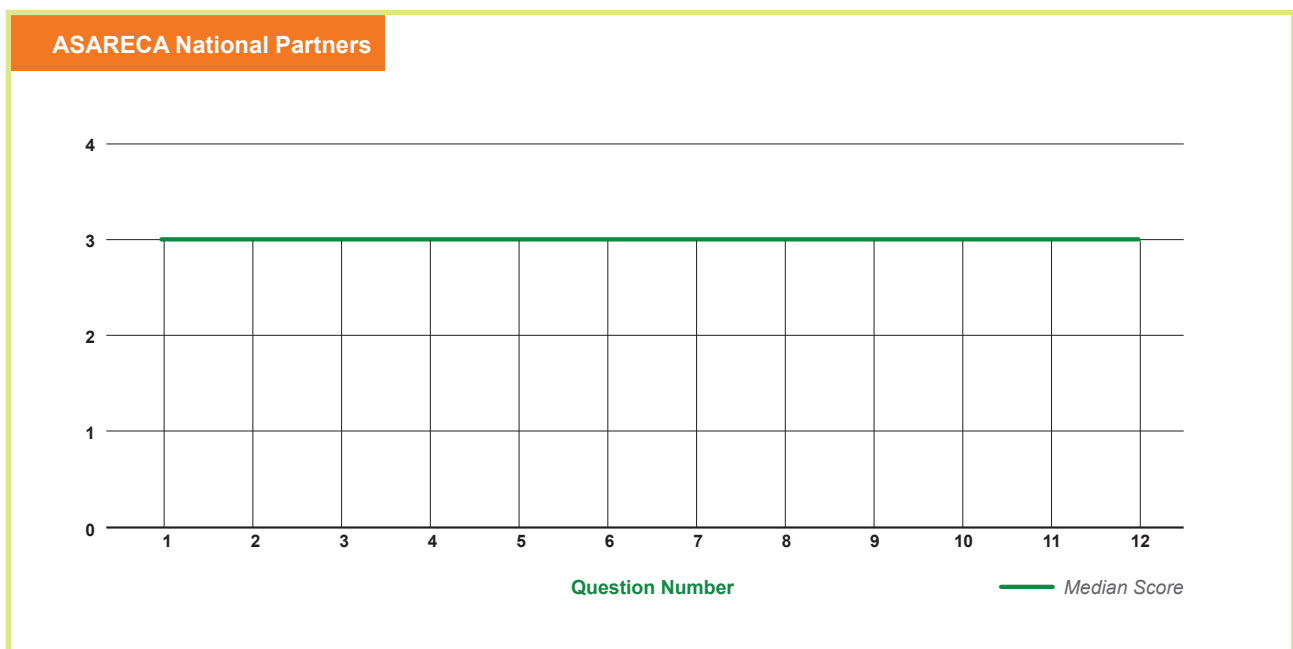
Figure 3: ASARECA National Partners Median Scores

The above graph shows a median score of (3) = Meets expectations for all questions 1-12 of the National Partner Survey. These questions 1-12 of the survey assessed ASARECA's Contribution to the organization/country of the respondent. The median score of 3 demonstrates satisfactory performance. The following table provides consolidated comments of the respondents to each of the 12 questions.

Questions 1-12 of the National Partners' Survey and partners' consolidated comments

	Survey Question	Consolidated comments of Responding Regional and National Partners
1	To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its strategy?	ASARECA needs to include sectors other than researchers in its operations and contacts to increase familiarity with its goals and objectives among country-level partners.
2	To what extent you think the priority actions of ASARECA reflect the regional/country-level Agricultural Innovation priorities and needs?	The nature and level of consultation is not inclusive enough to reflect the spectrum of priorities in the region. If ASARECA's new mandate focuses on development as well as research, this needs to be communicated. There are requests for technical support (ex. With NAIPs) out there, but channels of communication are weak need to be strengthened.
	To what extent is ASARECA' role and actions recognized in the region/country?	ASARECA visibility is not strong enough in the responding countries due to a number of reasons: information on ASARECA is not easily accessible by country officers; not all pertinent partners are contacted by ASARECA; ASARECA works with research institutions and has weak linkage with other types of institutions at the country-level; existing partnerships are not enough to support the visibility in a country.
3	How do you rate the level of your engagement in planning and joint activities with ASARECA?	Engagement with most respondents is quite recent and thus limited. In some countries, ASARECA's representation on the ground needs to be strengthened; previous relationships slowed down for some time and are now being revived.
4	How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and support climate-relevant sustainable agricultural transformation?	As ASARECA is now focused on planning, institutional building and capacity strengthening of its own Secretariat, there is not much seen at the country-level. There is a need to use multiple channels of dissemination of information and to involve multiple stakeholders.
5	How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming and assessing the different implications on gender and youth of the agricultural policies?	There is currently little witnessed activities of ASARECA in this regard. During its previous operation phase, ASARECA's support for gender mainstreaming seemed not to have been adequately funded to enable a good level of training of its NARIs staff to mainstream gender in their plans and activities. ASARECA Secretariat is requested to facilitate capacity development of NARI's scientists in the subject. Still, there are signs of progress as ASARECA is starting engagement with partners on the ground such as the private sector in Rwanda in this domain.
6	How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, policies and programs that support regional and country-level developmental efforts and community economic growth?	ASARECA needs to strengthen its communication and contacts with the development programs and policy development and implementation, at the country-level.
7	How far is the current knowledge management (KM) system of ASARECA facilitating access to, and exchange of up-to-date knowledge and expertise among its regional and national-level partners?	There is a need to create a regional knowledge hub that is linked to member countries' agricultural knowledge hubs, to improve access by stakeholders within the region. There is also a need that this knowledge hub targets other than the research institutions with pertinent information.

|	Survey Question	Consolidated comments of Responding Regional and National Partners
8	Are channels of feedback from national partners established, transparent and used regularly by ASARECA?	In most cases, ASARECA mainly depends on the National Focal Person to get feedback from a member country. Thus, there is no direct interactive channel with national partners to get their individual feedback. Initially ASARECA used to facilitate regional planning and review of regional projects and had feedback on the ground. This could be revived to enhance feedback. Also, the regional knowledge hub would provide a channel to improve such feedback.
9	How far is ASARECA's mandate and strategy communicated to you in communication materials?	Communication is satisfactory at the top management level, but not at the operational levels. Information on specific activities of ASARECA, needs to be more available to partners, through announced channels.
10	To what extent does ASARECA uses its communication channels to have a significant influence on the formulation and implementation of government policies at the national level?	The establishment of the structure of Patron ministers and General Assembly may support the goal of influencing policy formulation, yet a lot of work is needed in this respect.
11	How far does ASARECA uses its communication channels to support you in impacting the public view, especially regarding Climate-relevant Science, Technology, and Innovation?	Little communication, especially in the domain of climate change.

3.3.2 Regional Partners' Responses
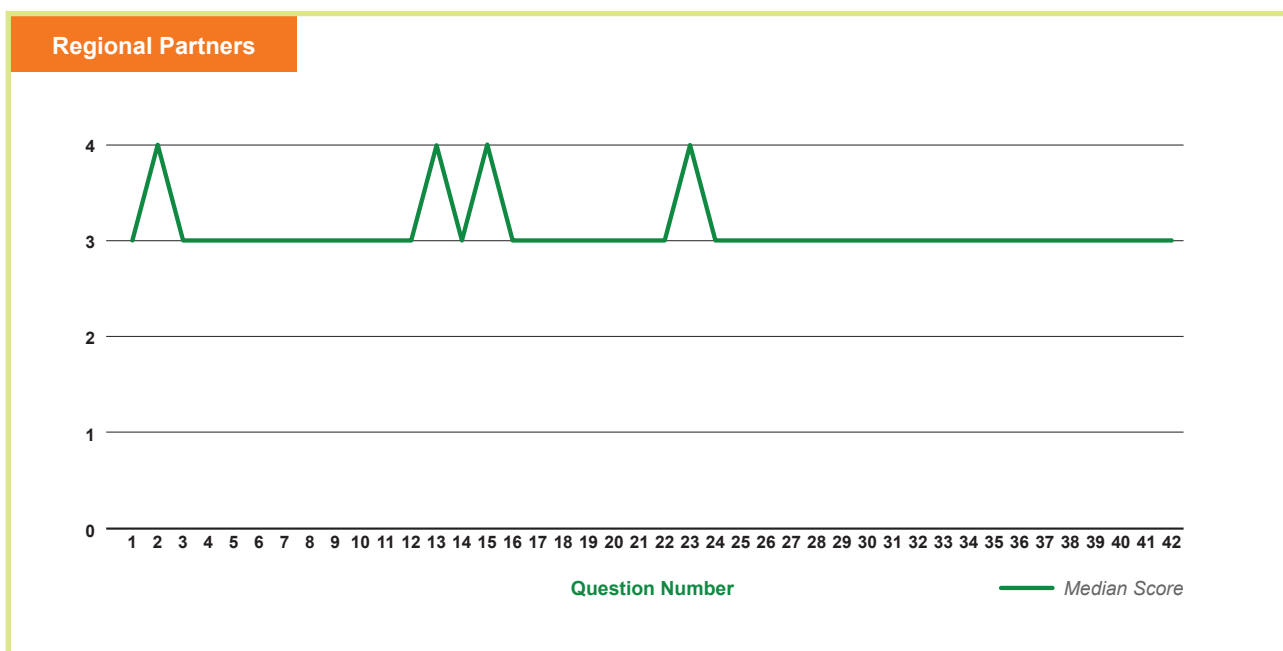
Figure 4: ASARECA Regional Partners Median Scores

Individual responses of regional partners have been aggregated into the above chart which displays the median

score of each question. Questions 1-12 were the same questions distributed to the national partners and assessed ASARECA's contribution to the region from the perspective of the regional partner. The above chart shows that median responses were 3=meets expectations and 4=exceeds expectations. Below are consolidated comments of respondents on the 12 questions.

■ ASARECA should further engage regional partners in planning and implementation of regional initiatives.
■ There is need for ASARECA to profile the successful Agricultural STIs in the region that address hunger, nutrition, and climate resilience.
■ There is need for improved focus on gender and youth specific interventions, especially mainstreaming youth, and women, in agricultural development policies.
■ ASARECA should promote its KM system and ensure that partners from different sectors participate and benefit from this system.

3.3.3 Global Partners' Responses

Global Partners

Question Number — Youth Organisations — International Research centers
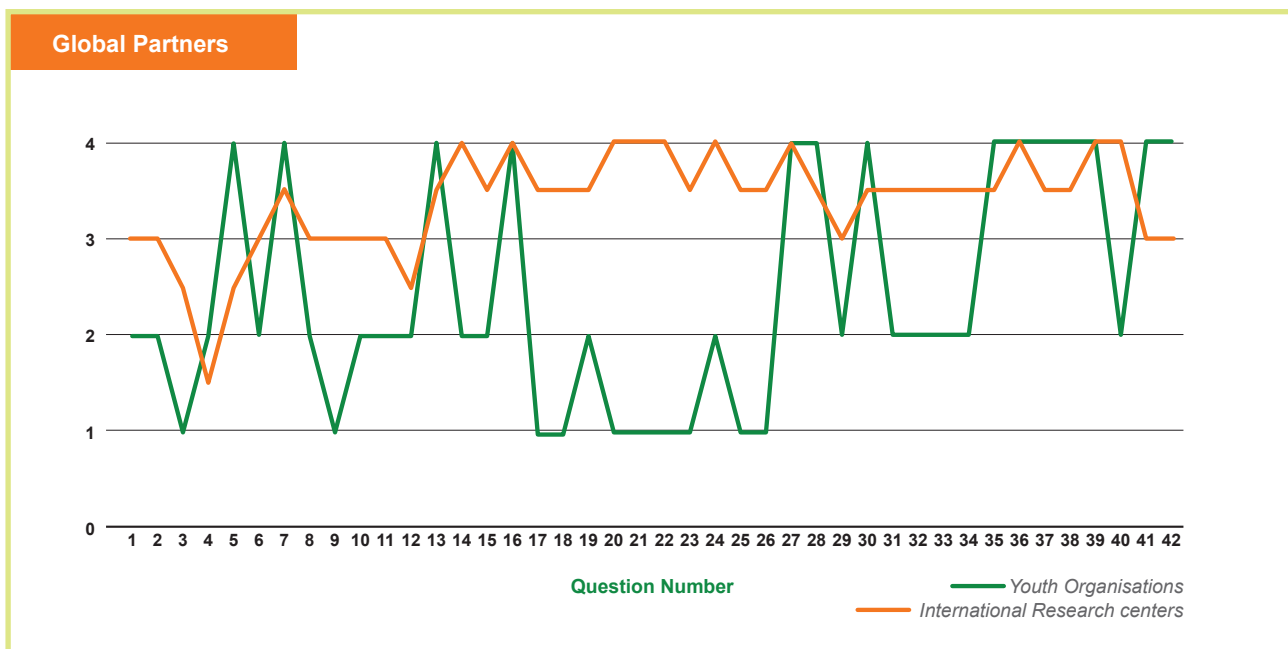
Figure 5: ASARECA Global Partners Scores

ASARECA **Global Partners** (International Research Centers and Youth Organizations) responded to the same questions as the regional and national partners (questions 1-12 of the survey focused on assessment of ASARECA's contribution to the region, from the perspective of the Global Partner). The above graph shows medians of responses to each question. Following is a list of consolidate comments of respondents to the 12 questions.

■ ASARECA's recognition in the region needs strengthening. This is because in the previous years only little work for short times took place.
■ Collaboration with sectors other than national research systems needs strengthening, ex. NGOS, Universities, private sector and CGIAR.
■ Need more engagement with partners and communication of activities.
■ Need to strengthen Influence on policy formulation and policy decision making.

3.3.4 Development Partners Responses

Development partners survey consisted of 18 questions. Please refer to the Development Partners (Donors) Survey, attached, for the detailed questions. The following graph illustrates the consolidated responses of ASARECA development partners.
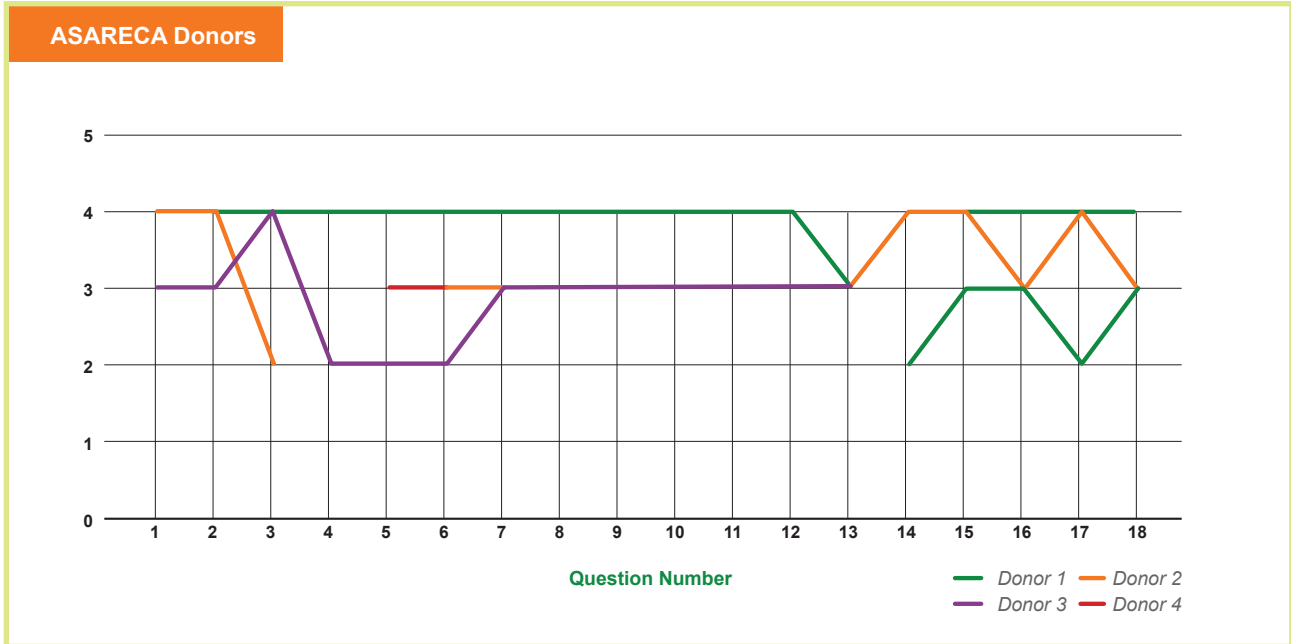
Figure 6: ASARECA Development Partners Scores

Donor 1 - The response indicates exceeds expectations to all question except for question 13 which is rated as meets expectations. Question 13 concern the current MEL system.

Donor 2 - The response indicates a gap in question 3 (recognition of ASARECA in the region, no response to question 4 (support of the environment) and then meets expectations and exceeds expectations to the rest of the questions.

Donor 3 - The response indicates that multiple questions were left unanswered with a note that the collaboration with ASARECA is still in its start.

Donor 4 - The response indicates gaps in the areas of support of the environment to the role of ASARECA, ASARECA's facilitation of effective partnerships, ASARECA's promotion of STIs for climate change, the availability of communication channels, and impacting the public view.

Following are consolidated comments of the donors to the survey questions:

- Member countries need to demonstrate their appreciation of the role of ASARECA through paying membership fees. Board should support ASARECA in getting fees paid by countries.
- if we equate the support of the environment to ASARECA with financing its work, then we may conclude that the environment does not support ASARECA.
- While ASARECA's goals and role are understood within the sector and there is strong professional/ technical support, the understanding of its goals at the country decision making level needs improvement.

- There is need to support an ambitious campaign by ASARECA to garner the necessary political support, to be able to put its strategy into action.
- The sector ministries should become more active in promoting ASARECA within the region, and strongly support their national research systems in lobbying for the necessary support to ASARECA.
- When resources are available, ASARECA will be able to achieve its goals.

3.3.5 Capacity Gap Profiles of Regional and National Partners

Consolidated Regional Partners Capacity Profiles
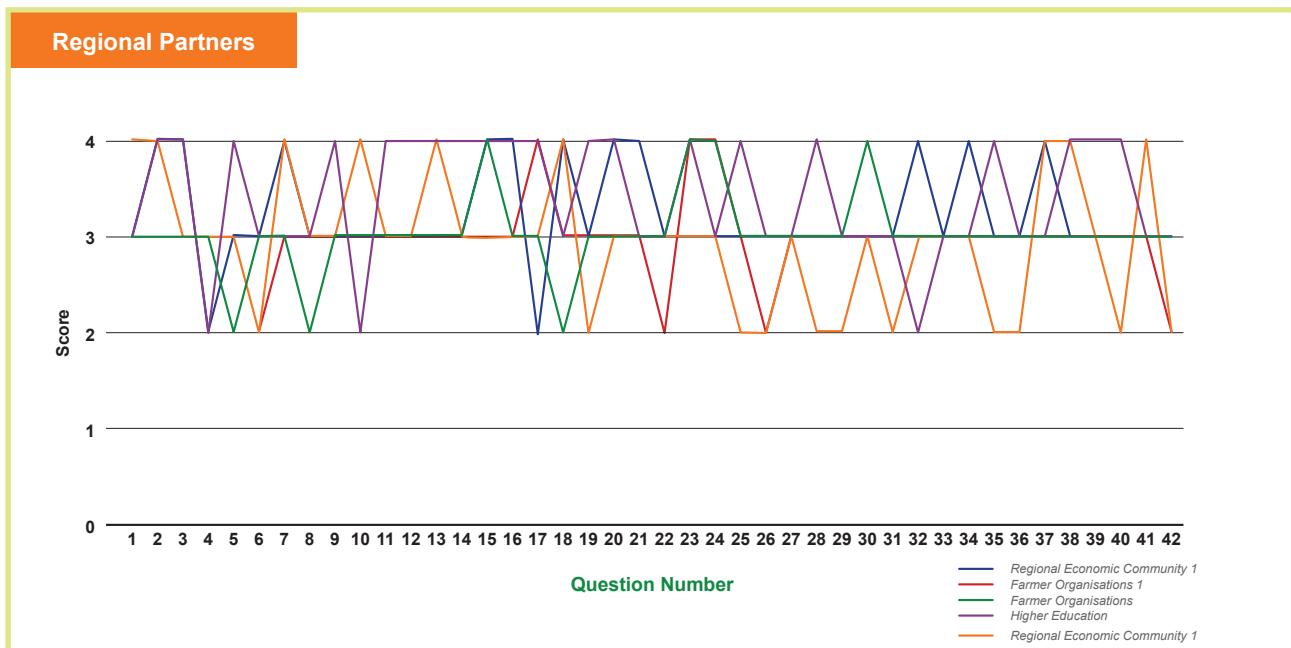
Figure 7: Regional Organizations Self-Assessment Results

Data Analysis: Responses of selected regional organizations to the Self-Assessment section of the CGA Survey (questions 13-42), show low median scores allocated by regional partners to questions 14, 15,16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26 and 28 of the survey. These questions covered the areas of promoting and influencing policies, promoting gender and youth mainstreaming, collaboration and joint reflection within the organization, aligning organizational budget with strategic plan and funded programs, level of computerization of finance and operating procedures, staff technical skills, procurement policies and procedures alignment with international codes of procurement, IT infrastructure, MEL System, KM System, Brokering partnerships and Resource mobilization.

National Partners Capacity Profiles

National Partners responded to the 42 questions 4-point survey. Questions 1-12 assessed the support of ASARECA to these countries, while questions **13-42 constituted self- assessment** of the countries to identify gap areas that ASARECA can support them in addressing. The survey covered the 12 member countries of ASARECA, and multiple sectors in each member country. Response rate was 52%. Following are the results of the self-assessment survey (questions 13-42).
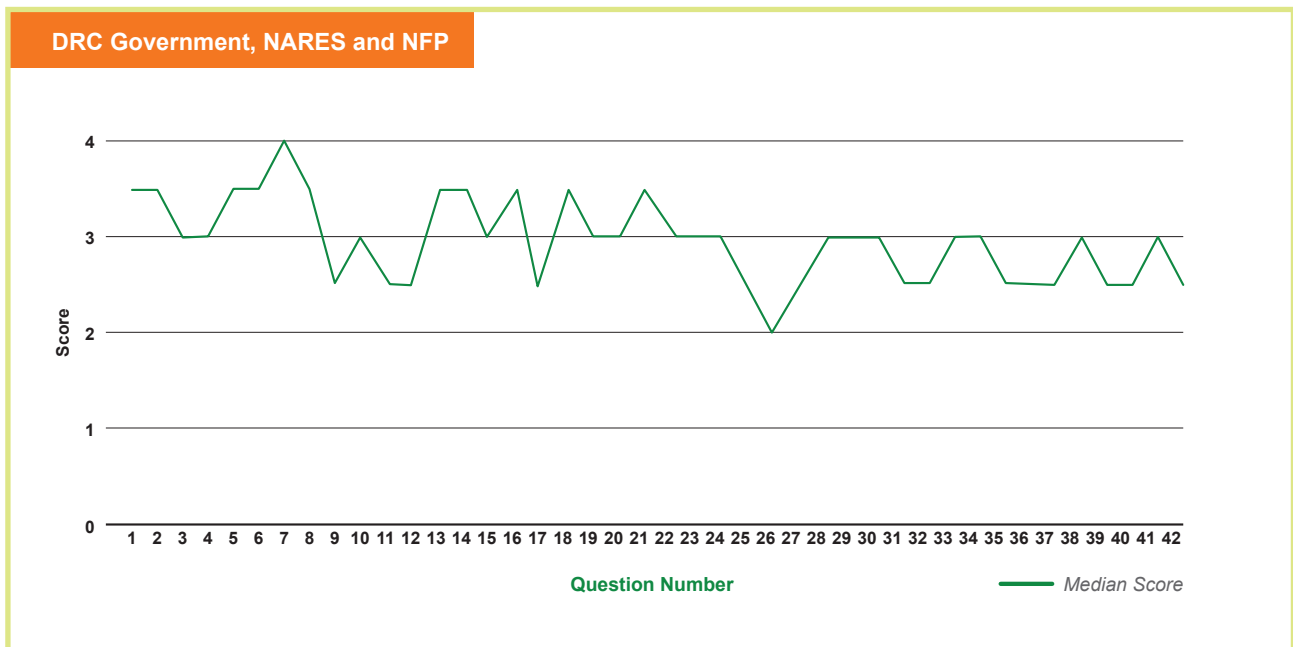
Burundi
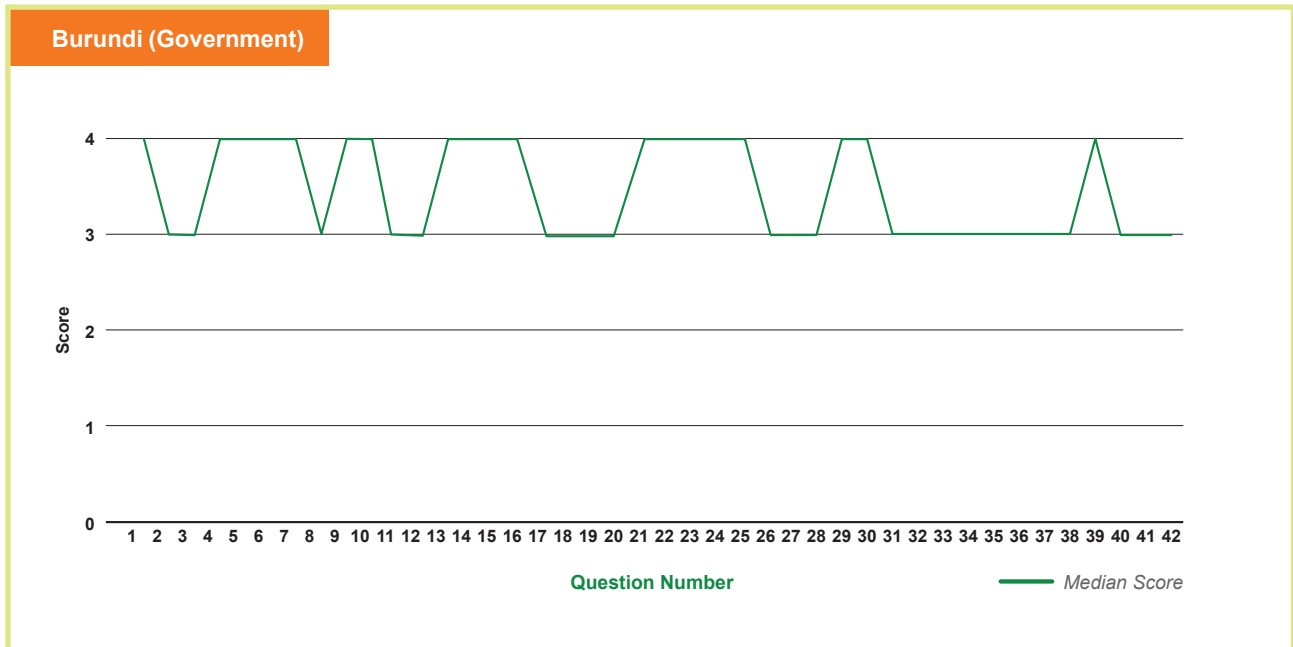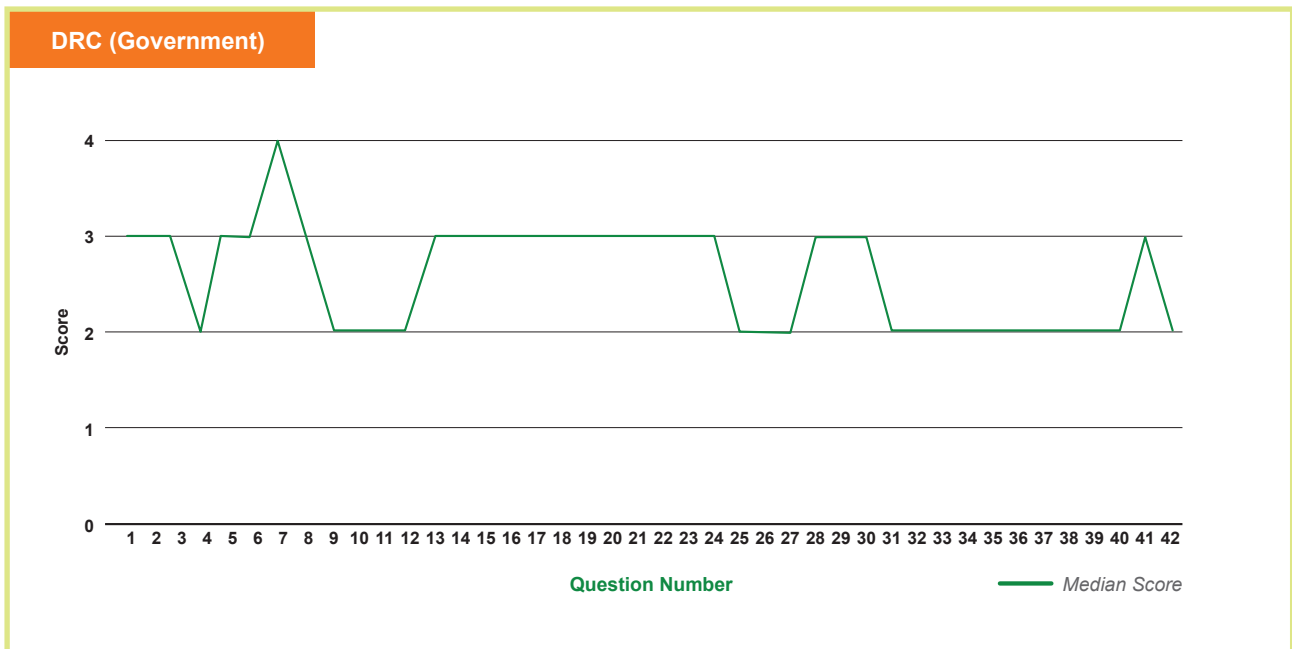

Figure 8: Burundi (Government/MoA)

Data Analysis: Scores allocated to questions are all between 3 (meets expectations), and 4 (exceeds expectations). Thus, there are no serious gap areas identified by Burundi (Government).

DRC

Figure 9: DRC (Consolidated Government, NARES and NFP)

DRC (Government)

**Figure 10: DRC (Government/MoA)**

Data analysis: Scores by DRC (Government/MoA) show capacity gaps in areas of MEL systems, KM systems, IT infrastructure, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and impacting policy, policy analysis and formulation skills, capacity to interact with diverse partners including age, ethnicity and gender, brokering partnerships, staff skills in MEL, KMS and RM, communication channels to sense the needs of partners and to exchange information, documentation of innovation, and diversification of sources of funding.

DRC (NFP)
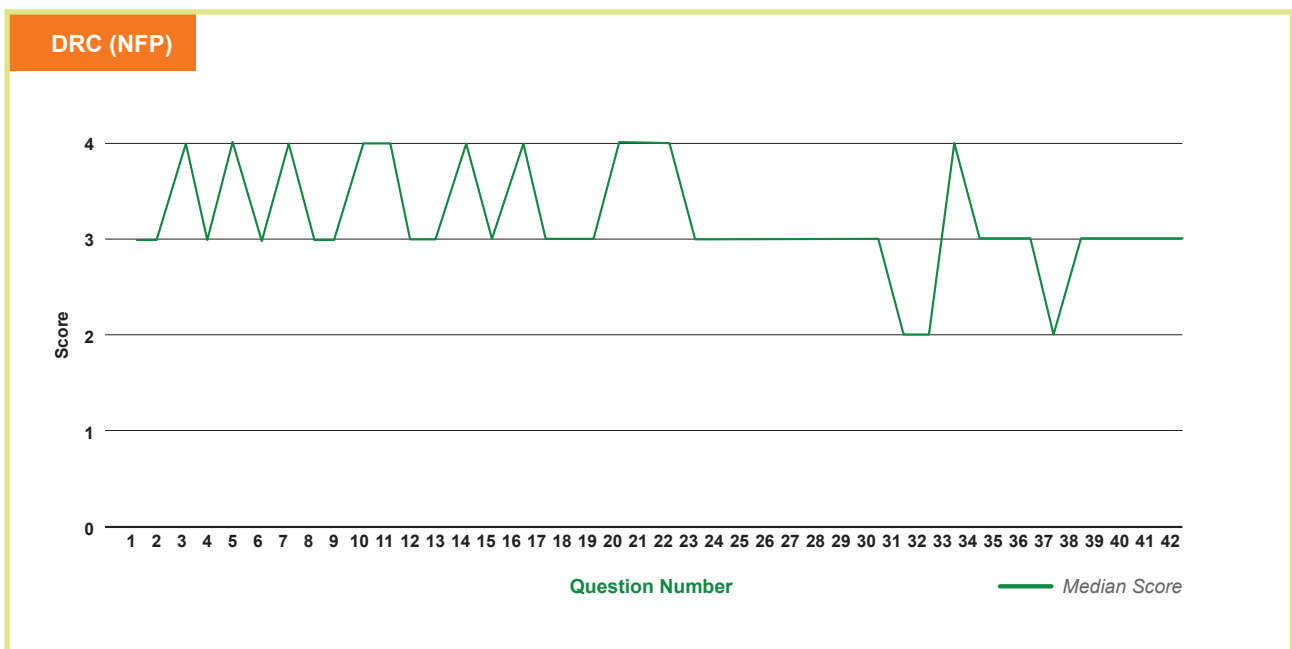
Figure 11: DRC (National Focal Persons)

Data analysis: Responses of the National focal point showed gaps in areas of policy analysis and formulation, brokering partnerships, and staff skills in resource mobilization.

Figure 12: DRC (NARS)

DRC (National Agricultural Research Center)
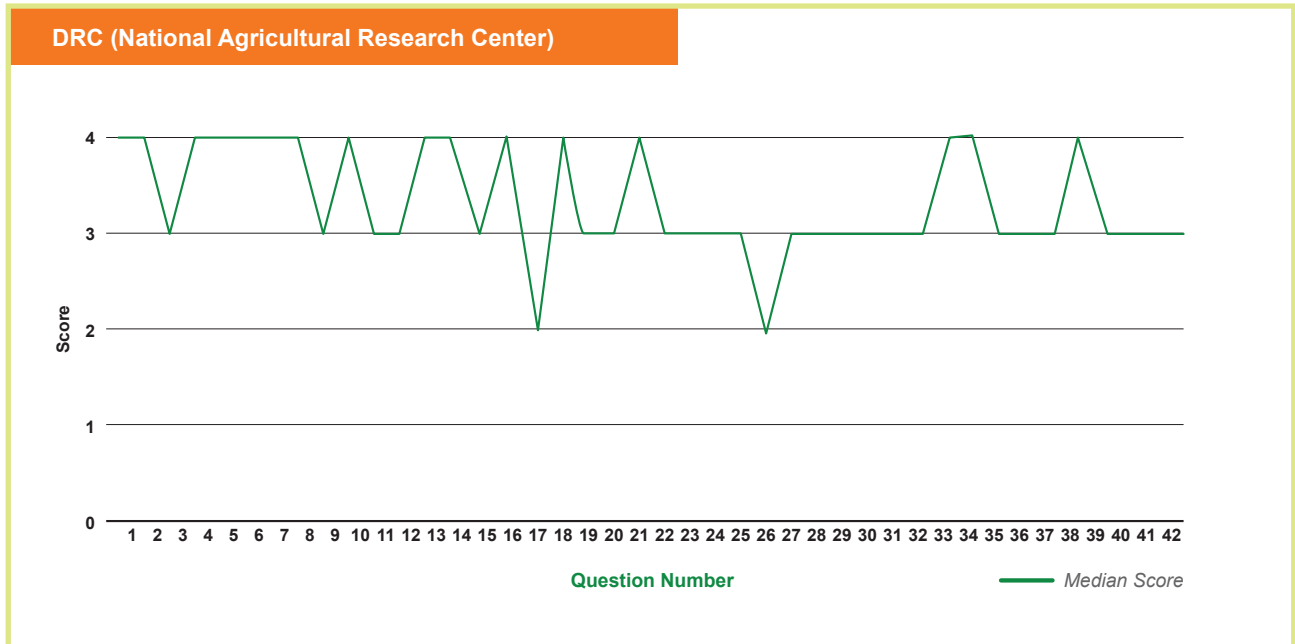
Data analysis: Scores by DRC (NARS) show capacity gaps in areas of aligning budget with strategic plan and projects, and MEL system computerisation.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO
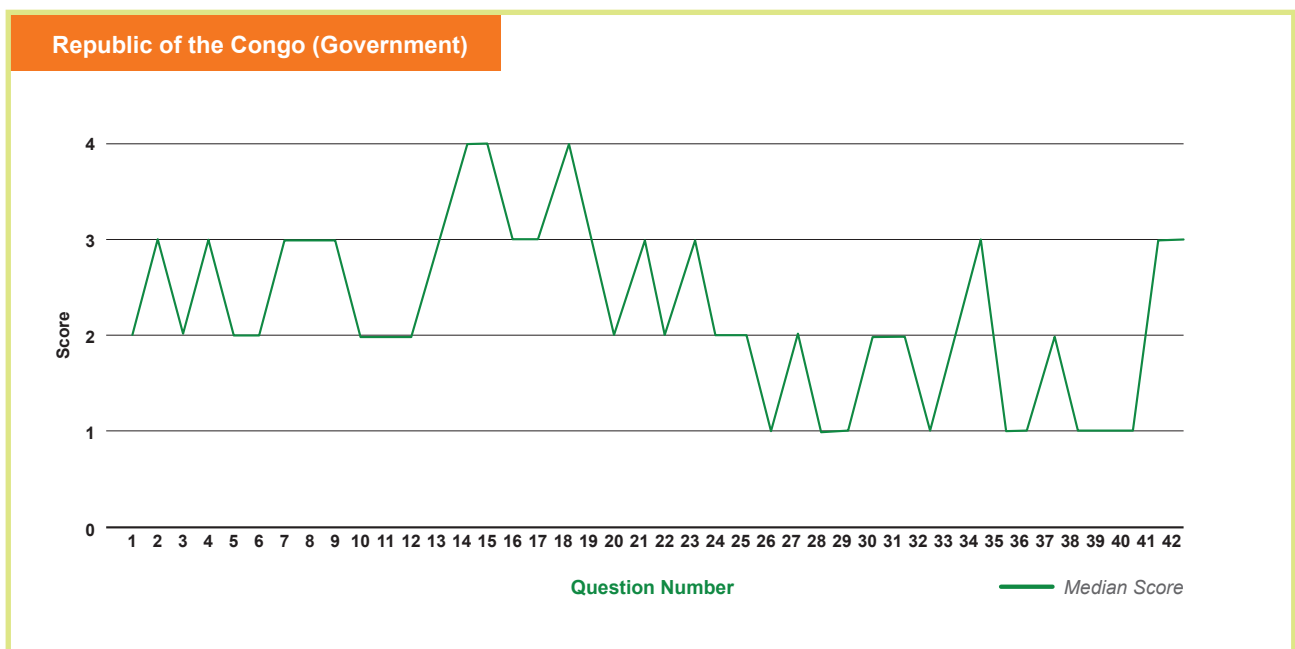

Republic of the Congo (Government)

Figure 13: Republic of Congo (Government)

Data analysis: Scores by Republic of Congo (Government) show capacity gaps in areas of MEL System, KM System, KMS compatibility with partners, Brokering partnerships, KMS staff skills, MEL staff skills, communication channels for sensing priorities, communication channels for learning and reflecting, and documentation of innovation processes.
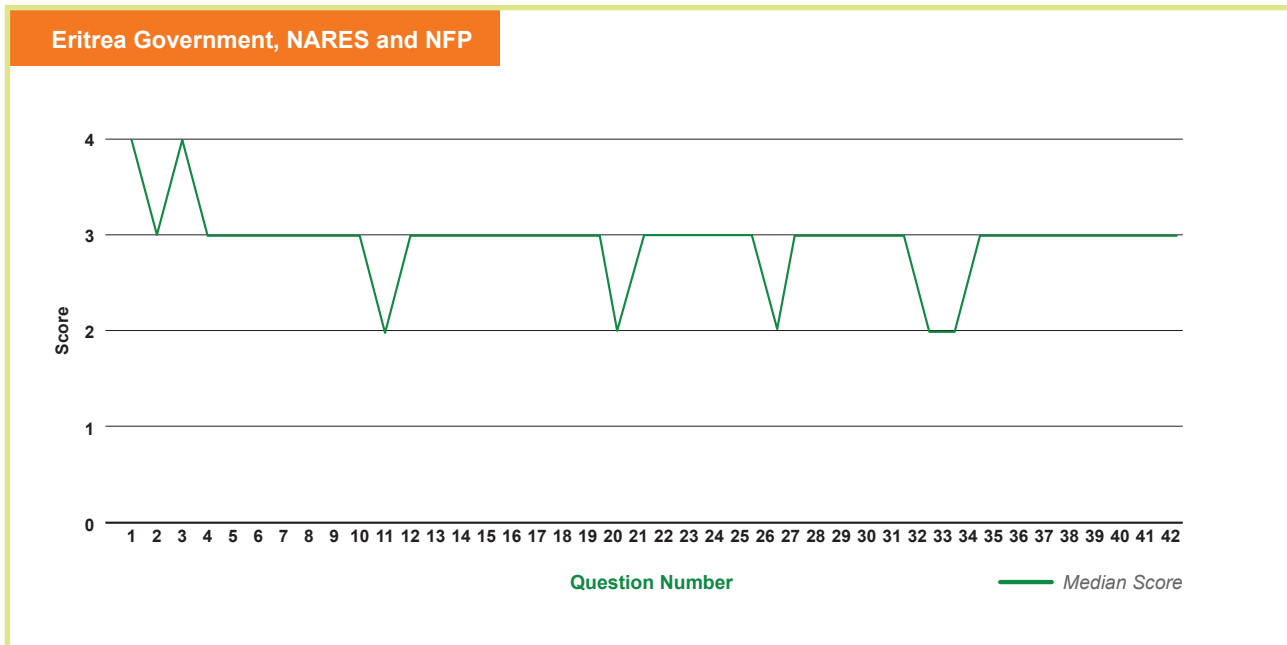
ERITREA

Eritrea Government, NARES and NFP

Figure 14: Eritrea (Eritrea consolidated Government, NARES, and NFP Responses)
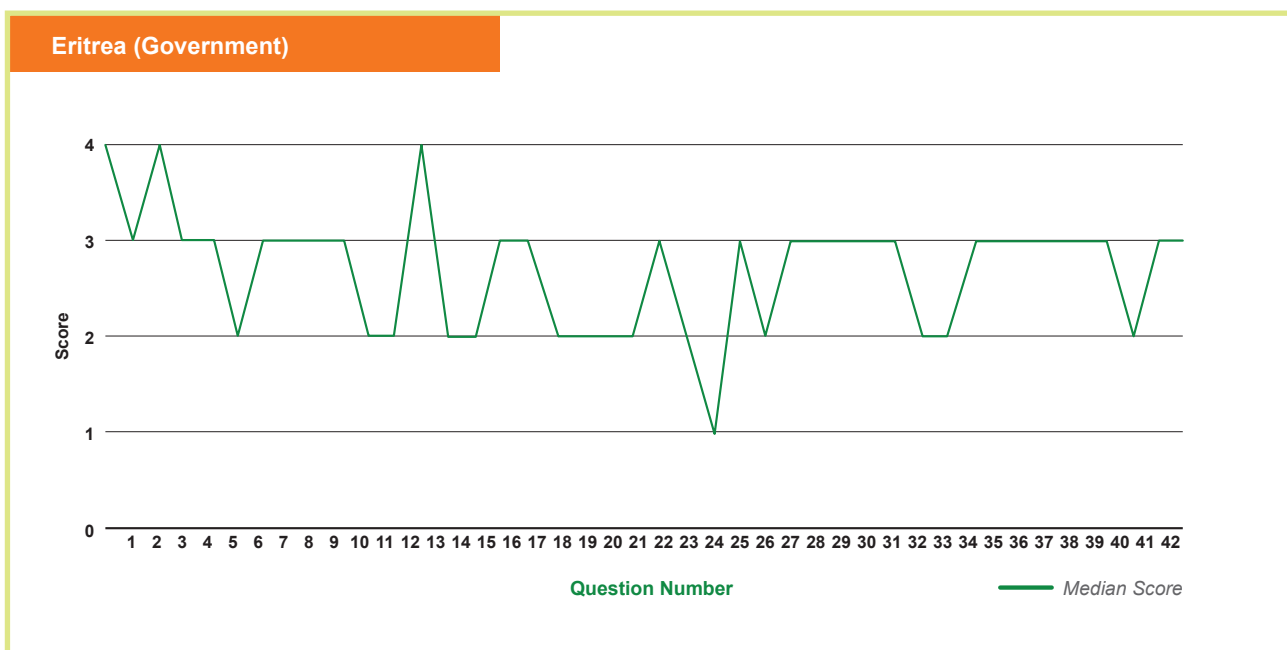

Eritrea (Government)

Figure 15: Eritrea (Government)

Data analysis: Scores by Eritrea (Government) show capacity in areas of mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing policies, gender and youth mainstreaming, separating core from project budget, computerising policies and procedures, skills of the finance staff, linking performance evaluation to the strategy of the organization, MEL system, policy analysis and formulation skills, brokering partnerships and documenting innovations.
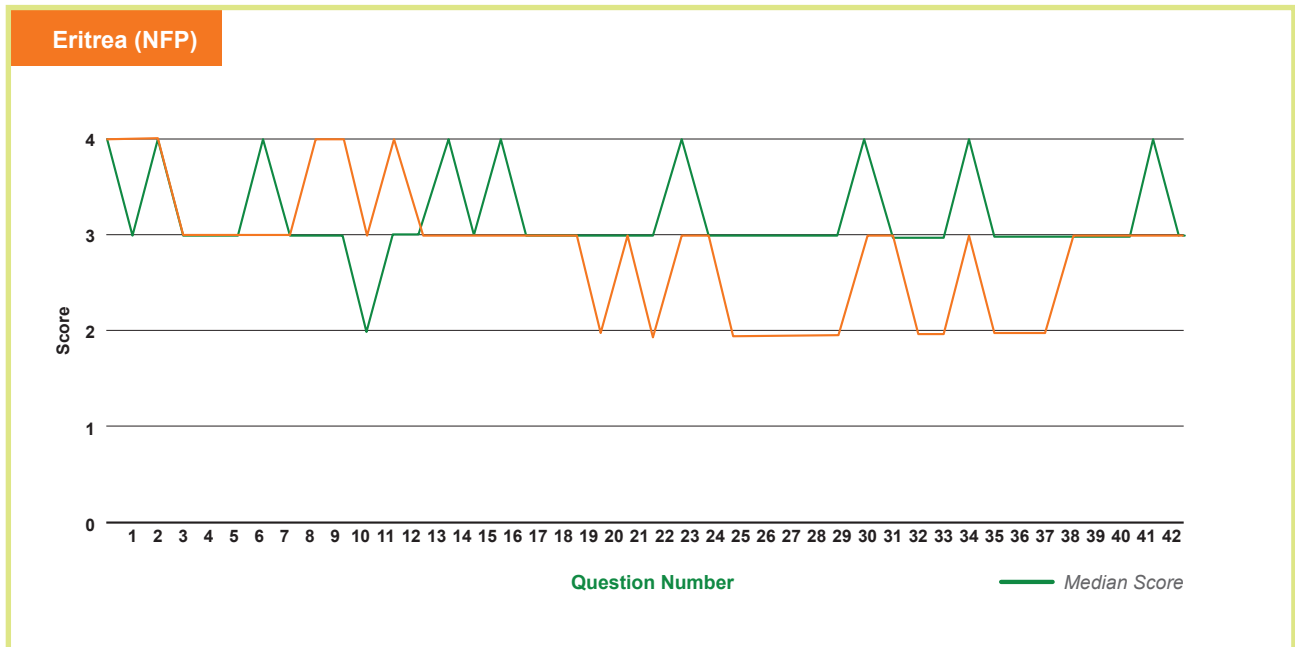

Figure 16: Eritrea (National Focal Persons)

Data analysis: Scores by Eritrea (NFP- 2 responses) show gaps in areas of Skills of finance staff, IT infrastructure, MEL System, KMS, staff skills in strategic planning and engagement with partners, staff skills in policy analysis and formulation, brokering partnerships, staff skills in KMS, Staff skills in MEL, staff skills in RM.
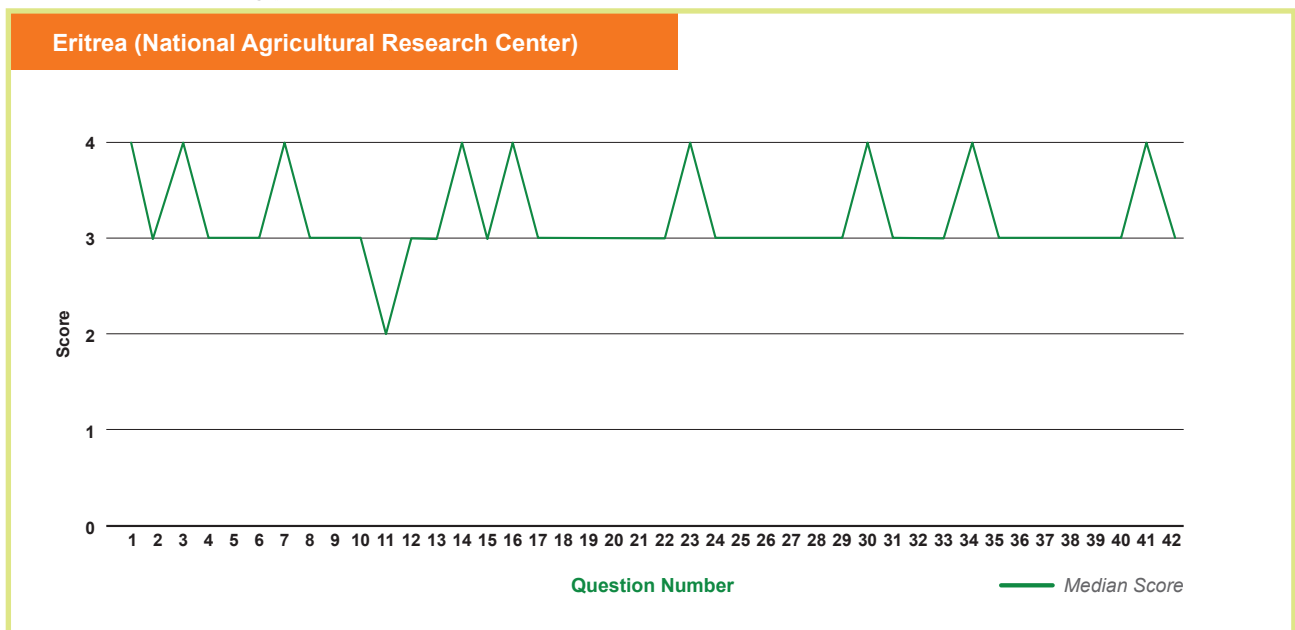

Figure 17: Eritrea (NARS)

Data Analysis: Scores by Eritrea (NARS) show no capacity gaps in areas of self-assessment (questions 13-42). 3= Meets expectations, 4= Exceeds expectations
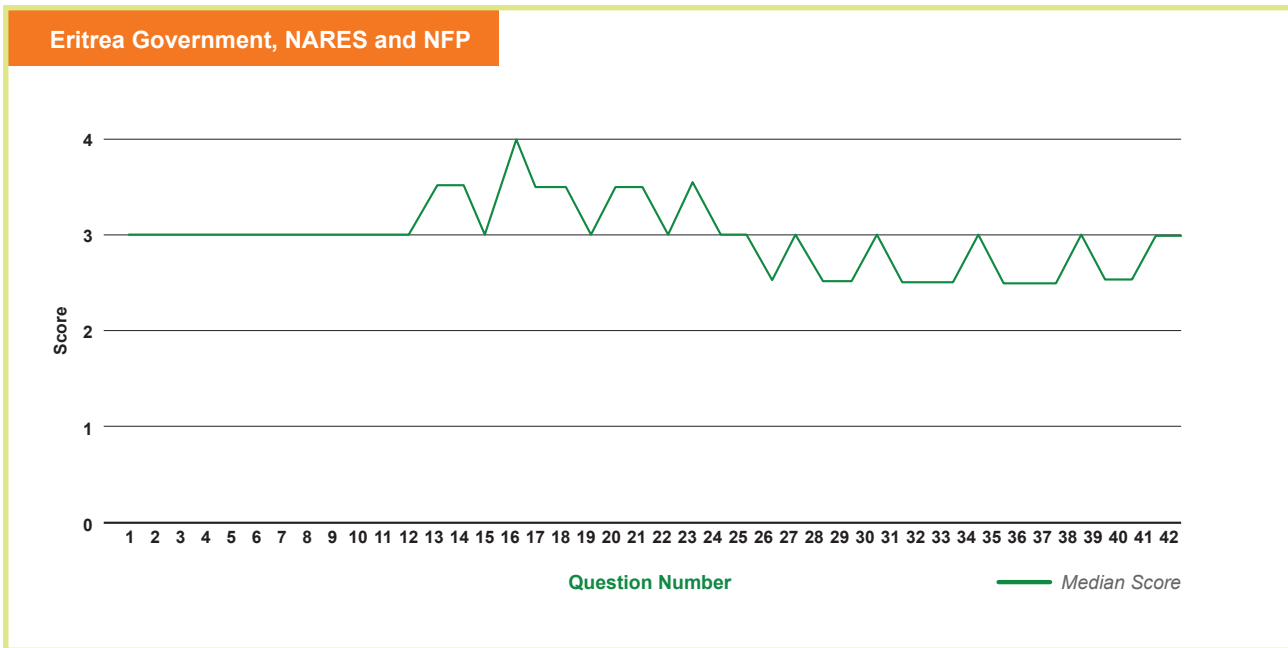
ETHIOPIA

Eritrea Government, NARES and NFP

Figure 18: Ethiopia (Consolidated Government, NARES and NFP)
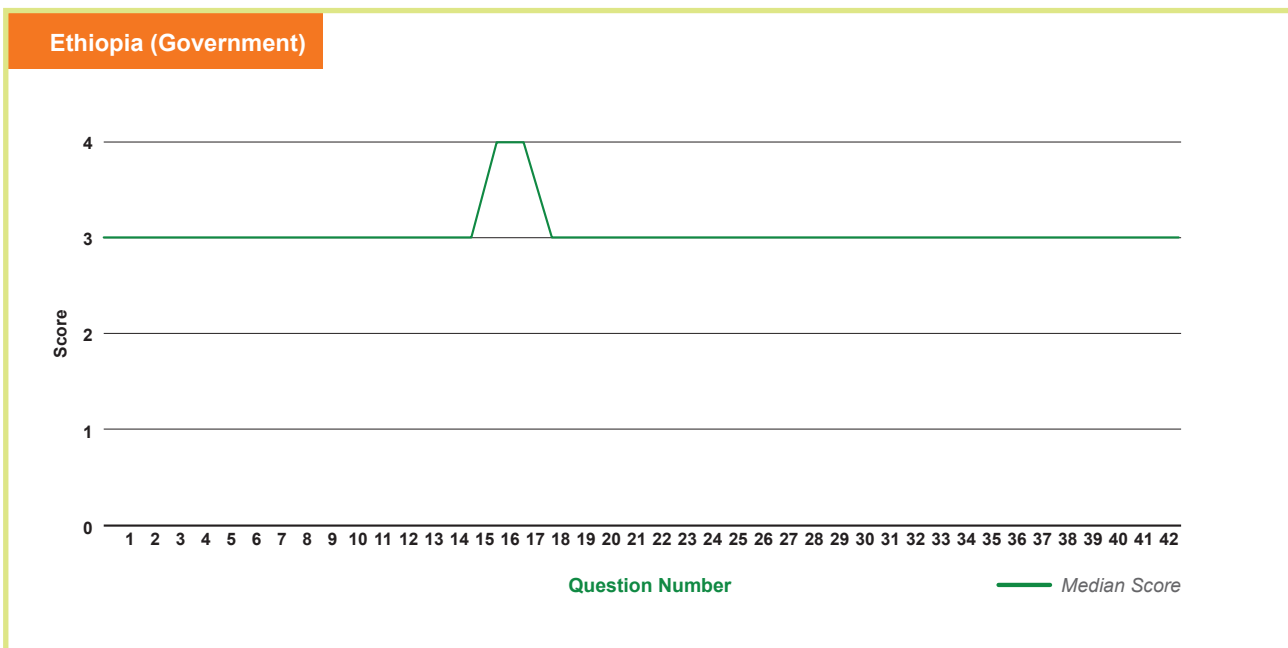

Ethiopia (Government)

Figure 19: Ethiopia (Government)

Data Analysis: Scores by Ethiopia (Government) show no capacity gaps in areas of self assessment (questions 13-42) 3= Meets expectations, 4= Exceeds expectations
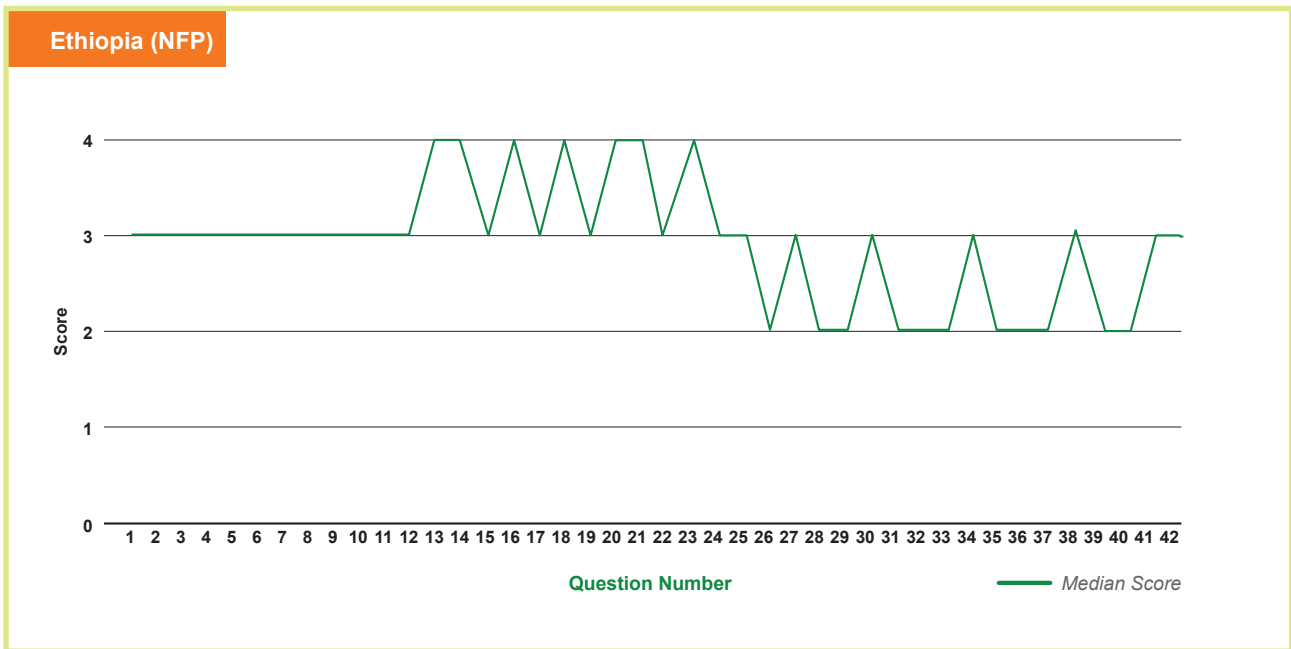
Ethiopia (NFP)

Figure 20: Ethiopia (National Focal Persons)

Data analysis: Scores by Ethiopia (NFP) show capacity gaps in areas of MEL System, KM System, KMS compatibility, staff strategic planning and engagement with partners skills, policy analysis and formulation, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and policy influencing, brokering partnerships, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL, staff skills in RM, communication channels for learning and reflection, and documenting innovations.
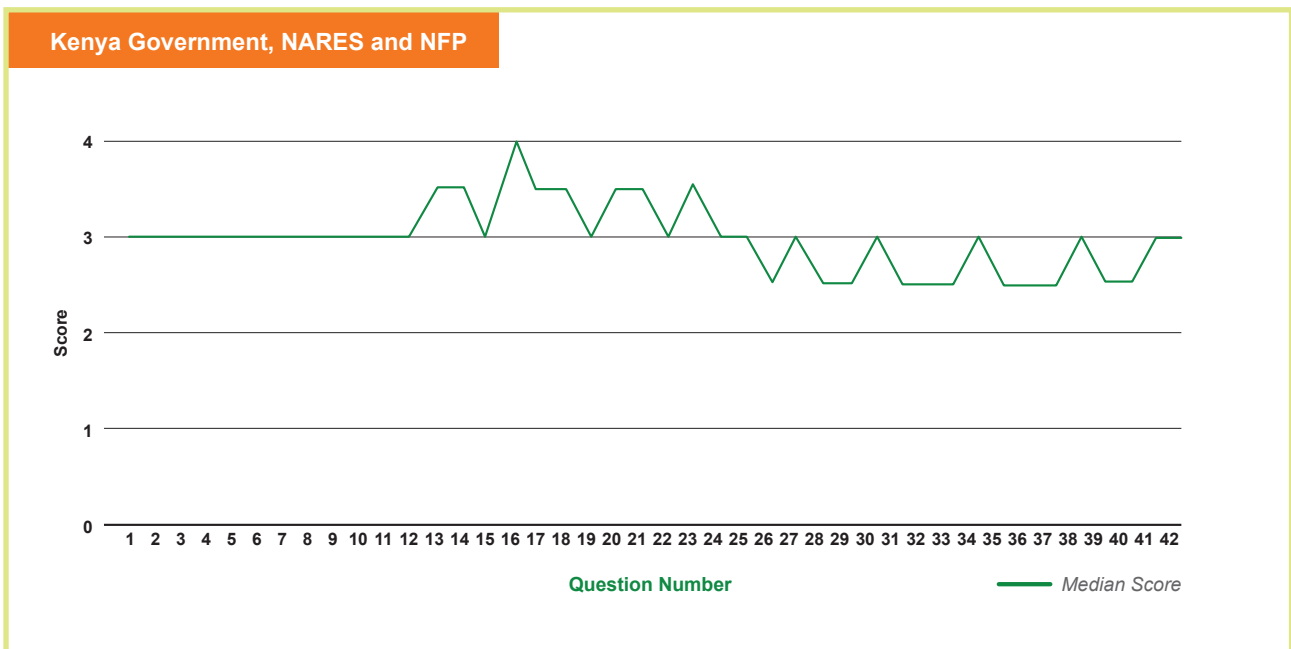
KENYA

Kenya Government, NARES and NFP

Figure 21: Kenya (consolidated Government, NARES and NFP)
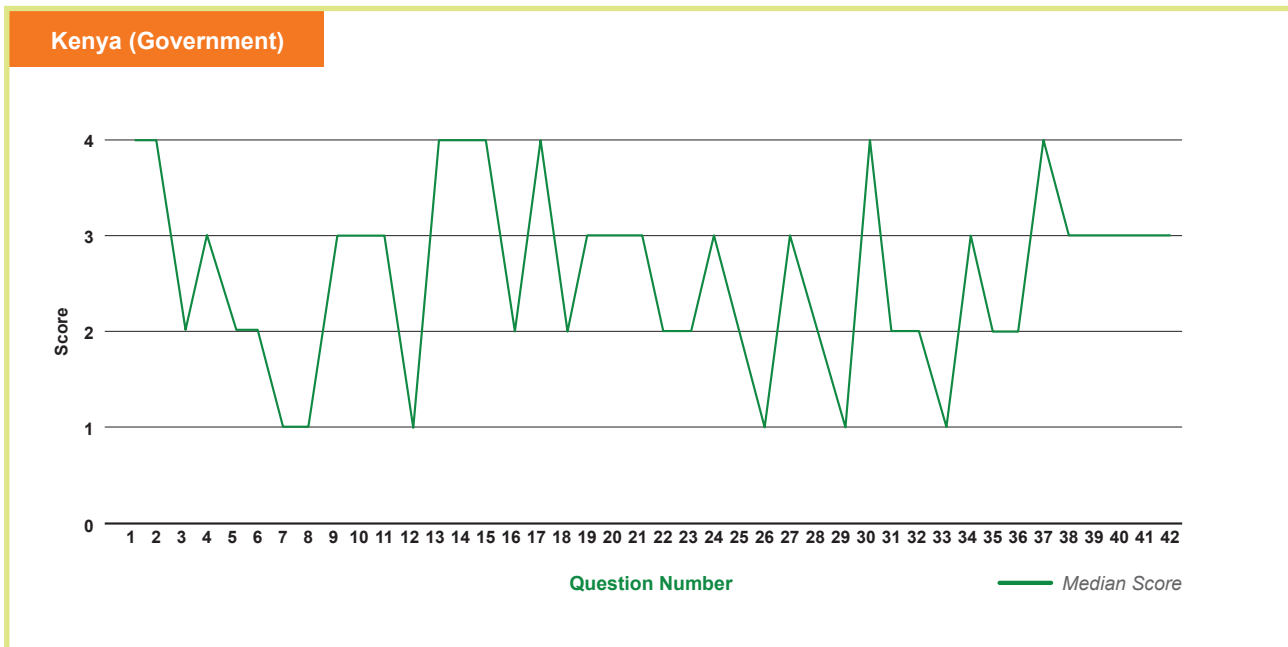
Kenya (Government)

Figure 22: Kenya (Government)

Data analysis: Scores by Kenya (Government) show capacity gaps in areas of staff collaboration, reflection and learning, separation of core and project budget, procurement process compatibility with international codes, IT capabilities, MEL compatibility, KMS compatibility, Policy analysis and formulation, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and policy influencing, brokering partnerships, KMS staff skills, and MEL staff skills.
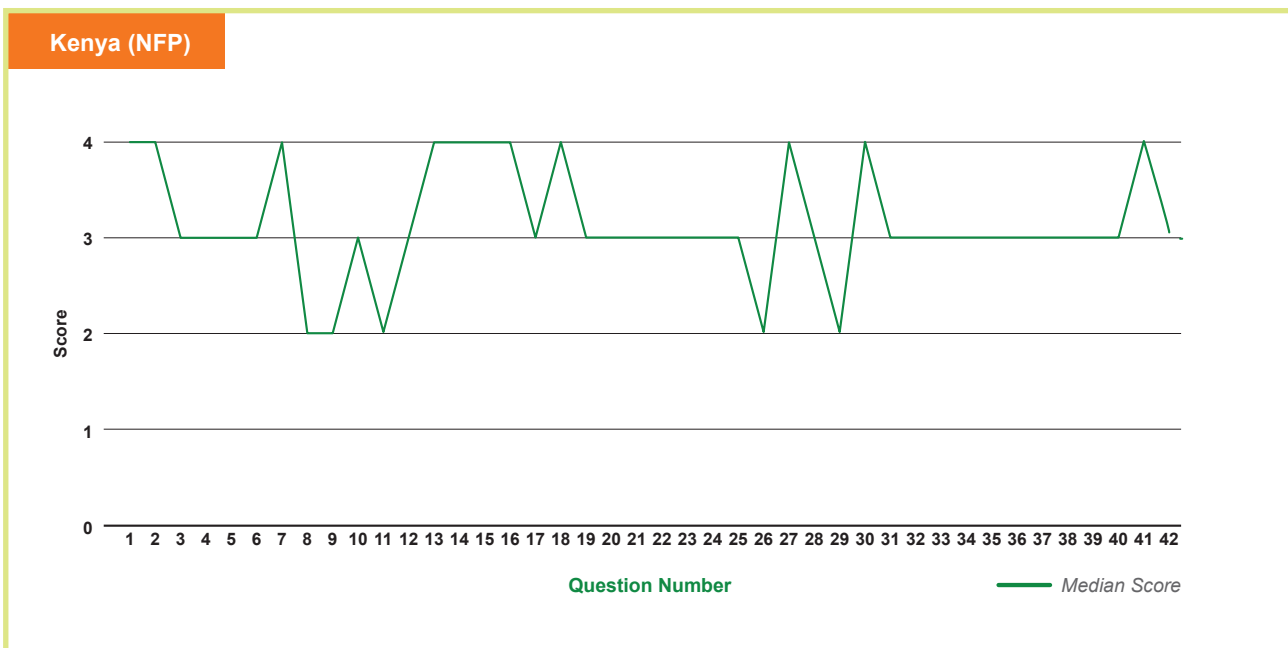
Kenya (NFP)

Figure 23: Kenya (National Focal Persons)

Data analysis: Scores by Kenya (NFP) show capacity gaps in areas of MEL computerization and KMS compatibility with partners' systems.

MADAGASCAR

Madagascar (Government)
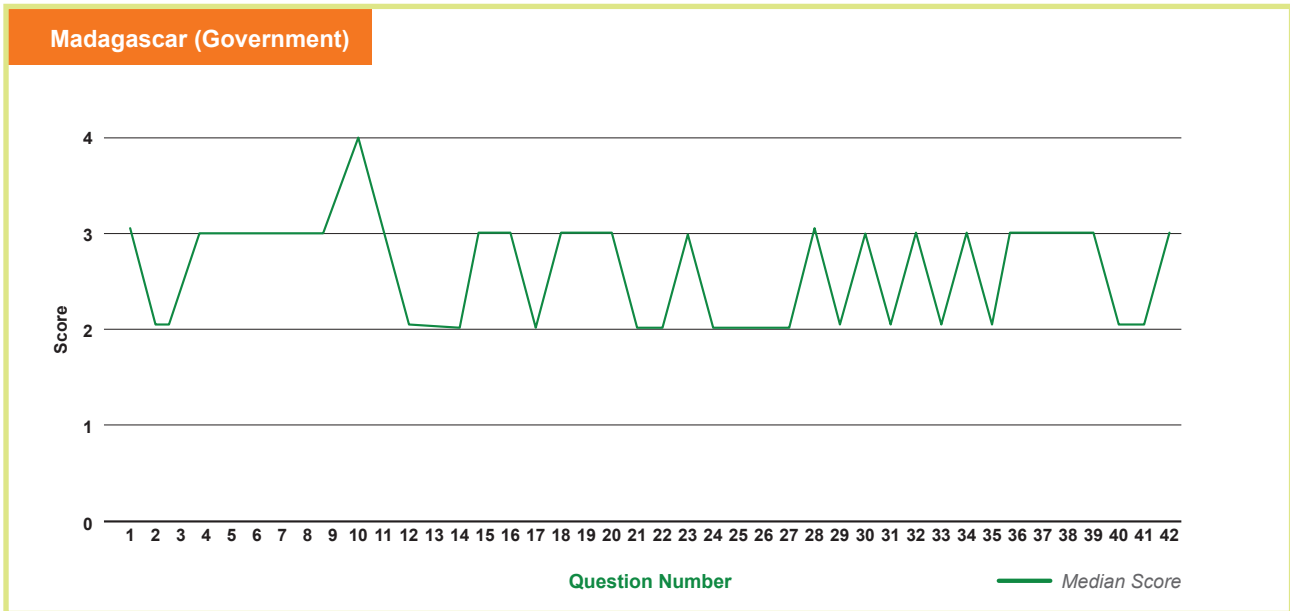
Figure 24: Madagascar (Government)

Data analysis: One response came from Madagascar – that of Madagascar (Government category). Scores by Madagascar (Government) show capacity gaps in areas of aligning projects to objectives of the organization, budget alignment with strategic plan & projects, procurement procedures compatibility with international codes and processes, IT infrastructure, performance evaluation alignment with strategy, MEL System, KMS compatibility, staff skills in mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing policies, staff skills in policy analysis and formulation, staff skills in brokering partnerships, staff skills in MEL, communication channels for sensing partners priorities, communication channels for learning and reflection, documenting innovation, and resource mobilization.

RWANDA

Poll Median Scores
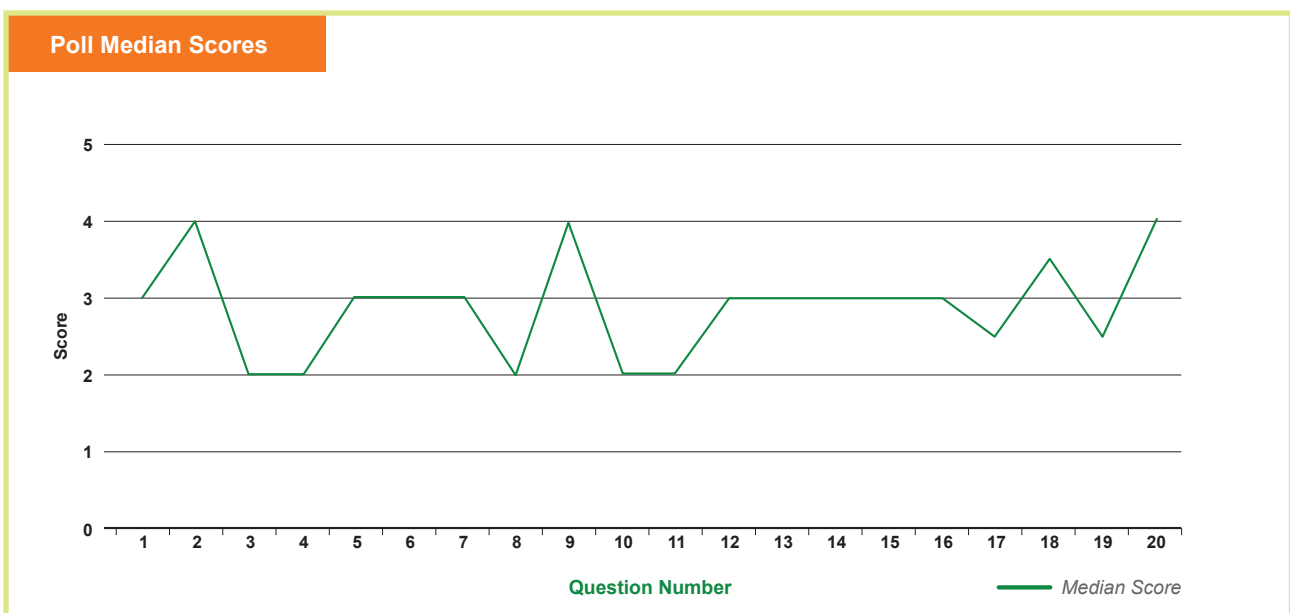
Figure 25: Rwanda (Higher Education)

Data analysis: Scores by Rwanda (Higher Education) show capacity gaps in areas of the computerization of finance and operating policies and procedures, technical skills of the finance staff, IT infrastructure, staff positions alignment with the organizational strategy, staff performance assessment alignment with strategy, MEL system, MEL system computerization and KM System.
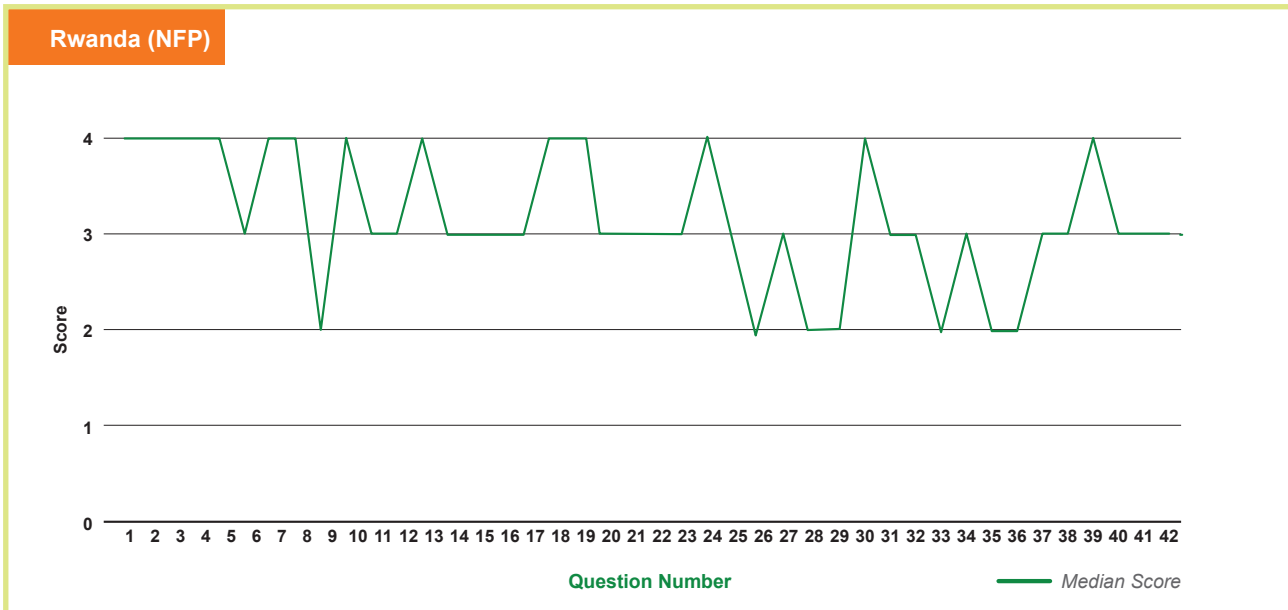
Figure 26: Rwanda (National Focal Point)

Data analysis: Scores by Rwanda (NFP) show capacity Gaps in areas of MEL computerisation, KMS, KMS compatibility, policy analysis and formulation, policy advocacy, brokering partnerships, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL.
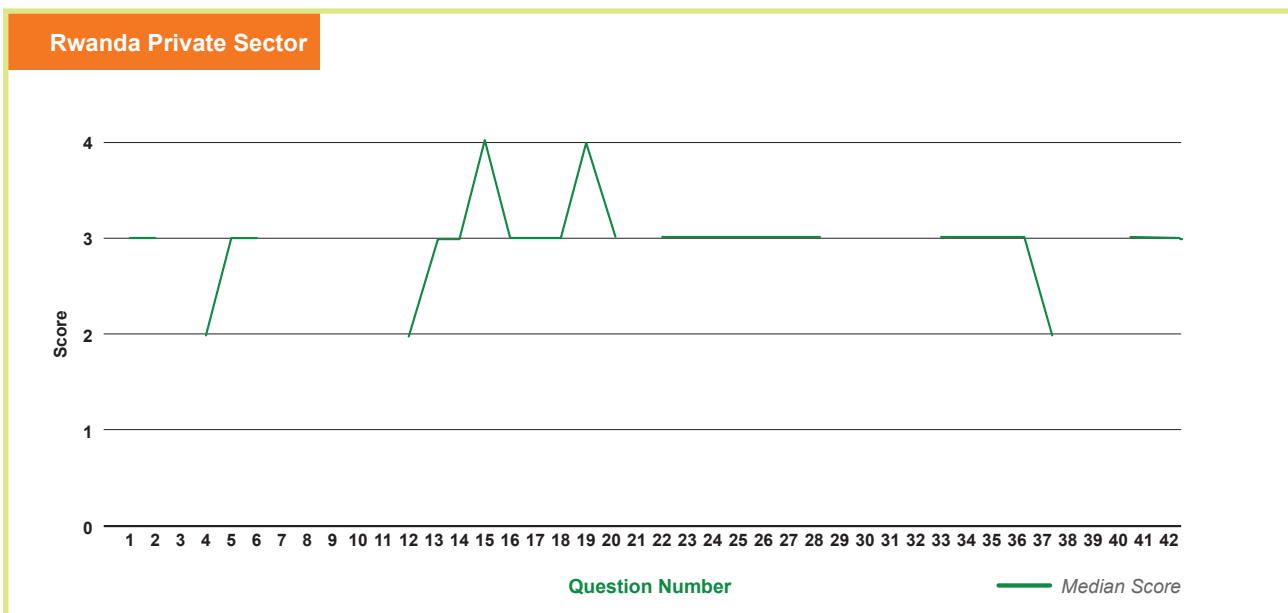
Figure 27: Rwanda (Private Sector)

Data analysis: Scores by (Rwanda Private Sector) show capacity gaps in areas of staff skills in policy analysis and formulation and staff skills in resource mobilization.
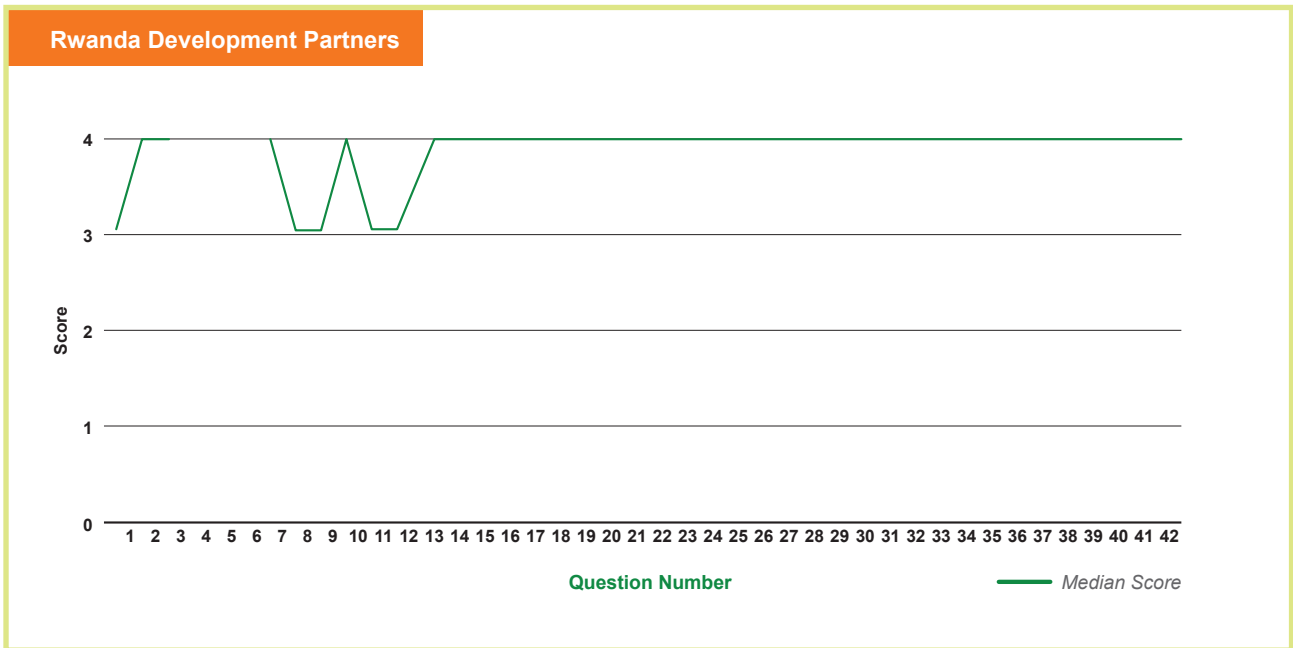
Figure 28: Rwanda (Development Partner)

Data analysis: Scores by Rwanda (Development Partner) show no capacity gaps. 3 (Meets expectations), 4 (Exceeds expectations)

SOUTH SUDAN
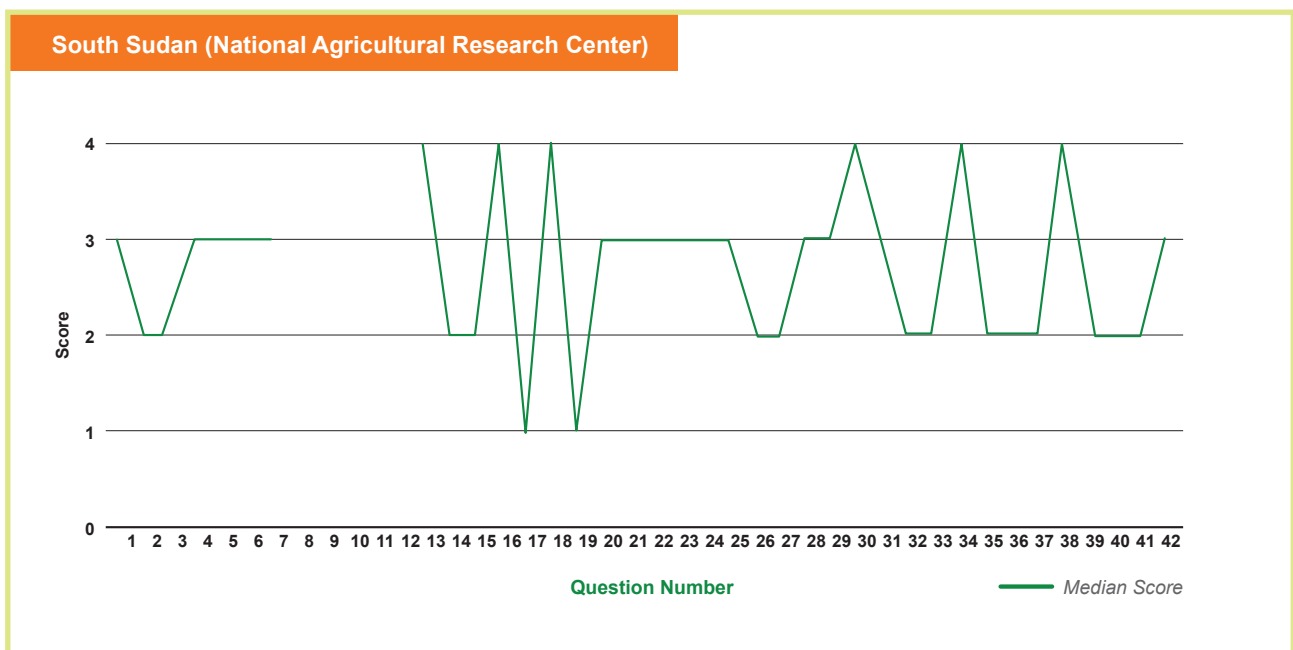
Figure 29: South Sudan (NARS)

Data analysis: Scores by South Sudan (NARS) show capacity gaps in areas of mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing policies, policy analysis and formulation, gender and youth mainstreaming, budget alignment with strategy, policies and procedures computerization, MEL computerisation, IT infrastructure, KM System, brokering partnerships, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL, staff skills in RM, communications channels for learning & reflection, documenting innovation, and resource mobilization.

SUDAN
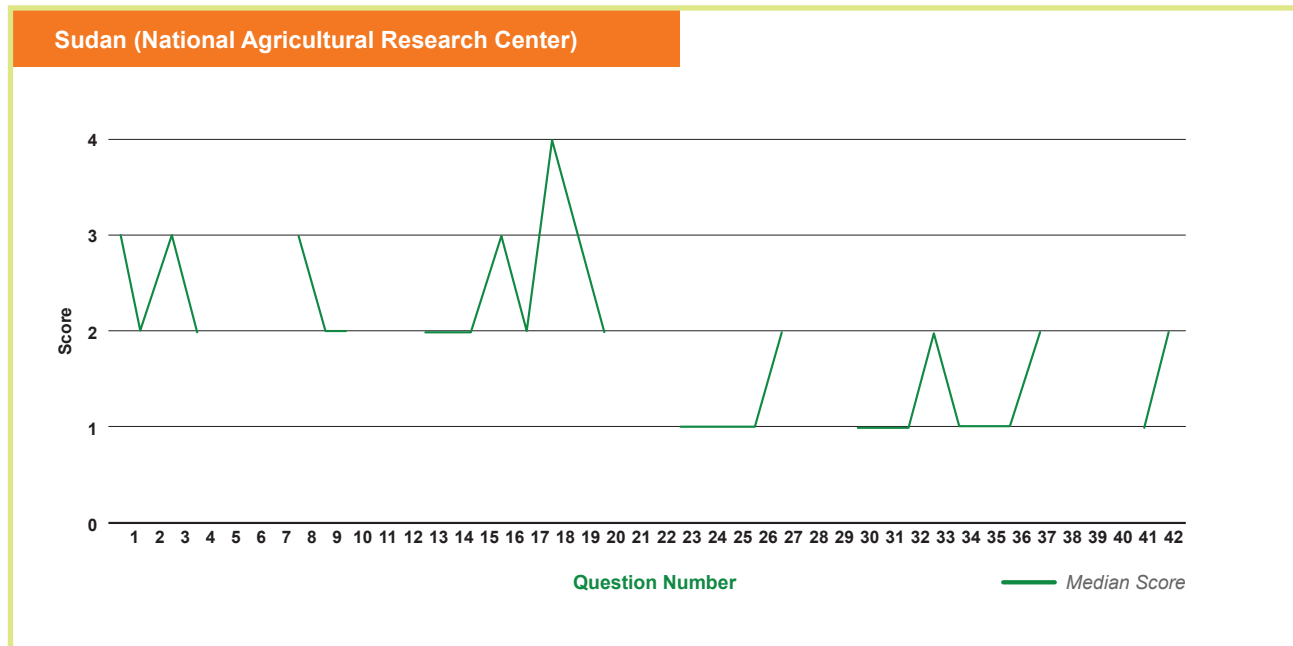
Figure 30: Sudan (NARS)

Data analysis: Scores by Sudan (NARS) show capacity gaps in areas of aligning activities to goals and objectives, gender and youth mainstreaming, aligning budget to strategy, skills of the finance staff, aligning performance evaluation with strategy, MEL System, MEL computerisation, IT infrastructure, KM System, staff skills in policy analysis and formulation, policy advocacy and influencing policies, brokering partnerships, interacting with diverse partners, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL, staff skills in RM, communication channels for sensing partners' priorities, documenting innovation, resource mobilisation and diversifying resources.

TANZANIA
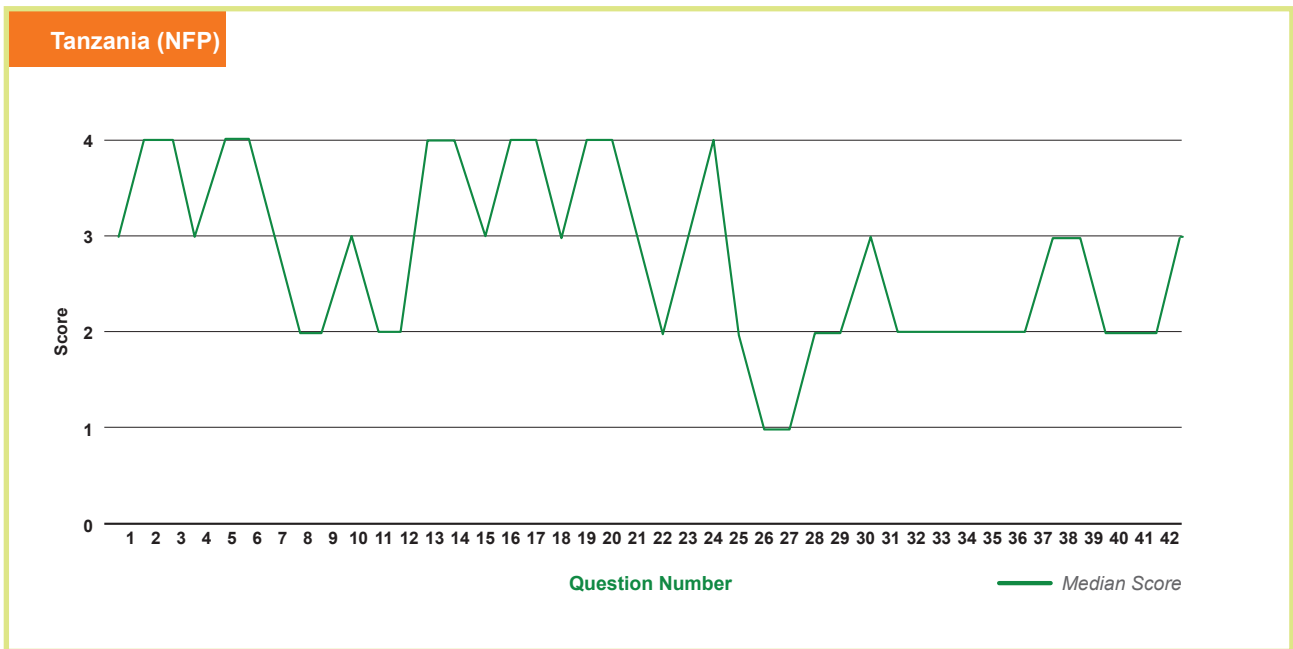
Tanzania (NFP)

Figure 31: Tanzania (National Focal Persons)

Data analysis: Scores by Tanzania (NFP) show capacity gaps in areas of IT infrastructure, MEL computerization, KM System, KMS compatibility, policy analysis and formulation, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing policies, brokering partnerships, interacting with diverse partners, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL, staff skills in RM, communications channels for learning and reflecting, documenting innovation, and resource mobilization.

UGANDA

Uganda Government, NARES and NFP
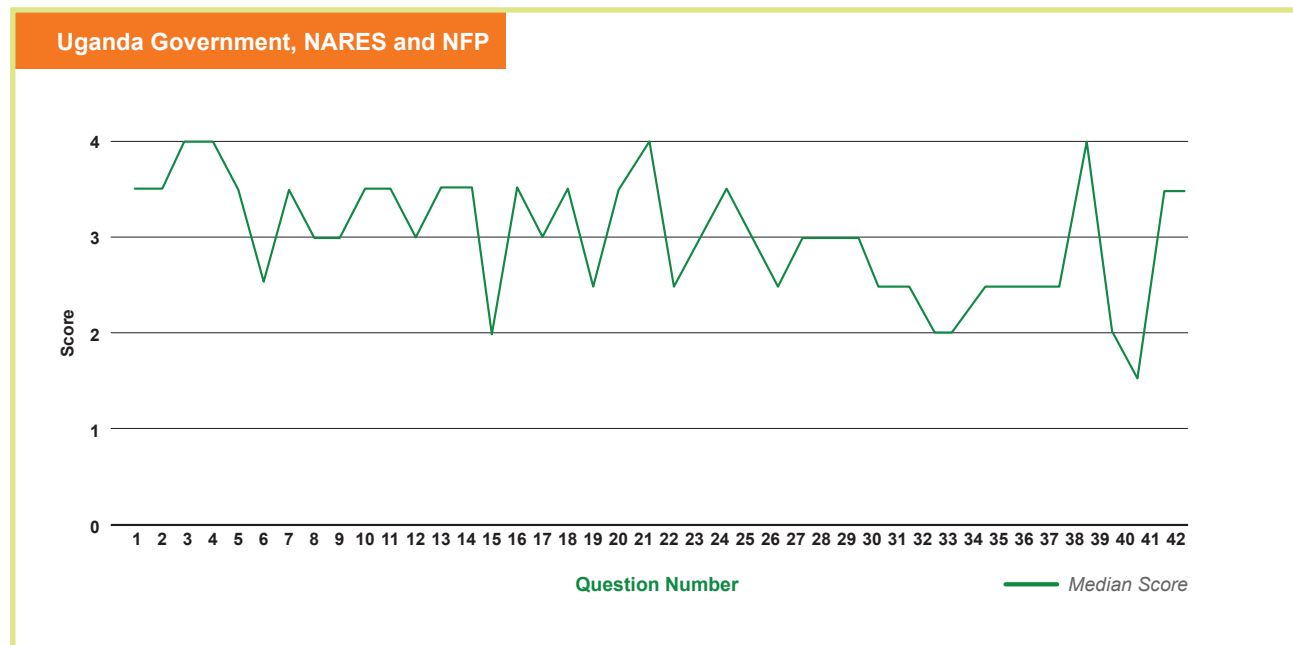
Figure 32: Uganda Consolidated (Government, NARES and NFP)

Tanzania (NFP)
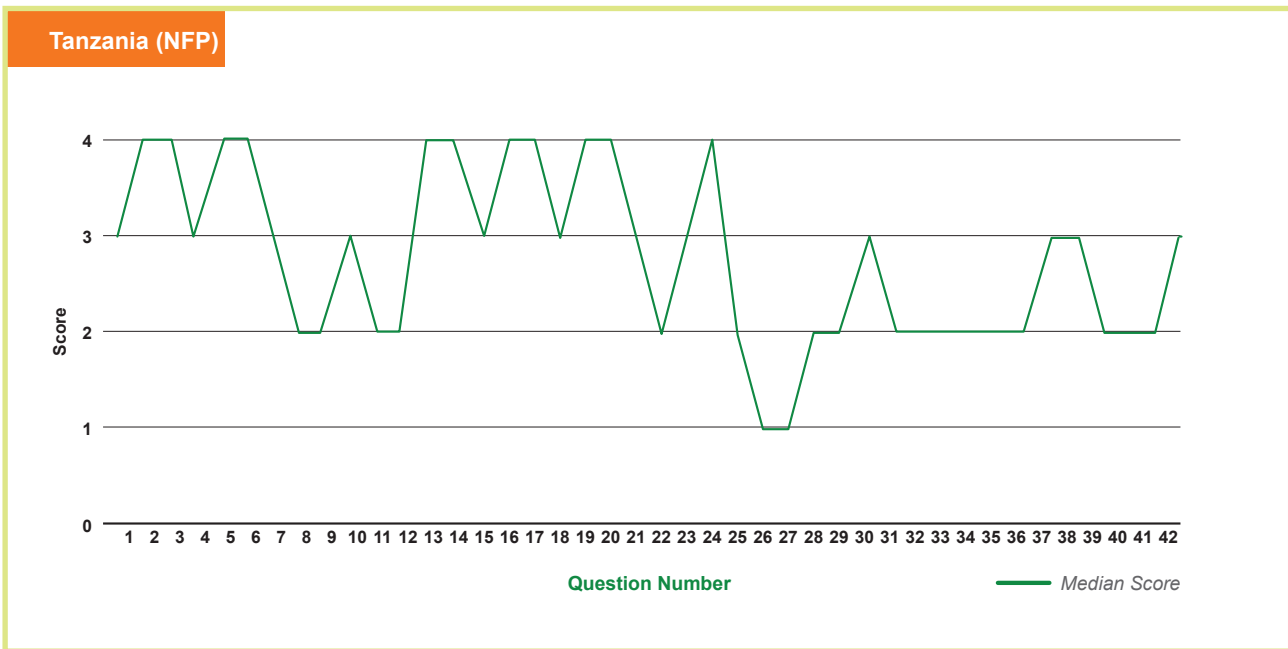
Figure 33: Uganda (Government)

Data analysis: Scores by Uganda (Government) show capacity gaps in areas of youth and gender mainstreaming, documenting innovations and resource mobilization.


Uganda (Government)
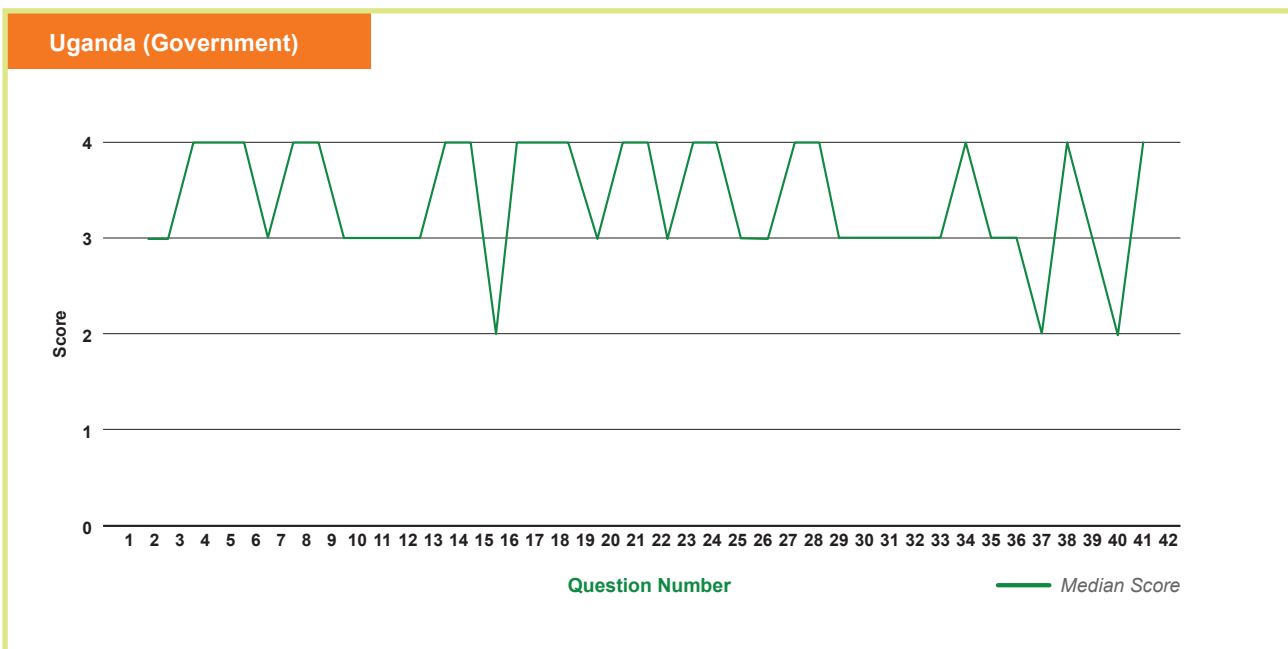
Figure 34: Uganda (NARS)

Data analysis: Scores by Uganda (NARS) show capacity Gaps In areas of youth and gender mainstreaming, aligning budget with strategy, computerization of policies and procedures, IT infrastructure, aligning staffing with strategy, MEL computerization, KM System, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and policy influencing, policy analysis and formulation, brokering partnerships, staff skills in KMS, staff skills in MEL, availability of channels for sensing partners' priorities, communication channels for reflection and learning, and documenting innovation.
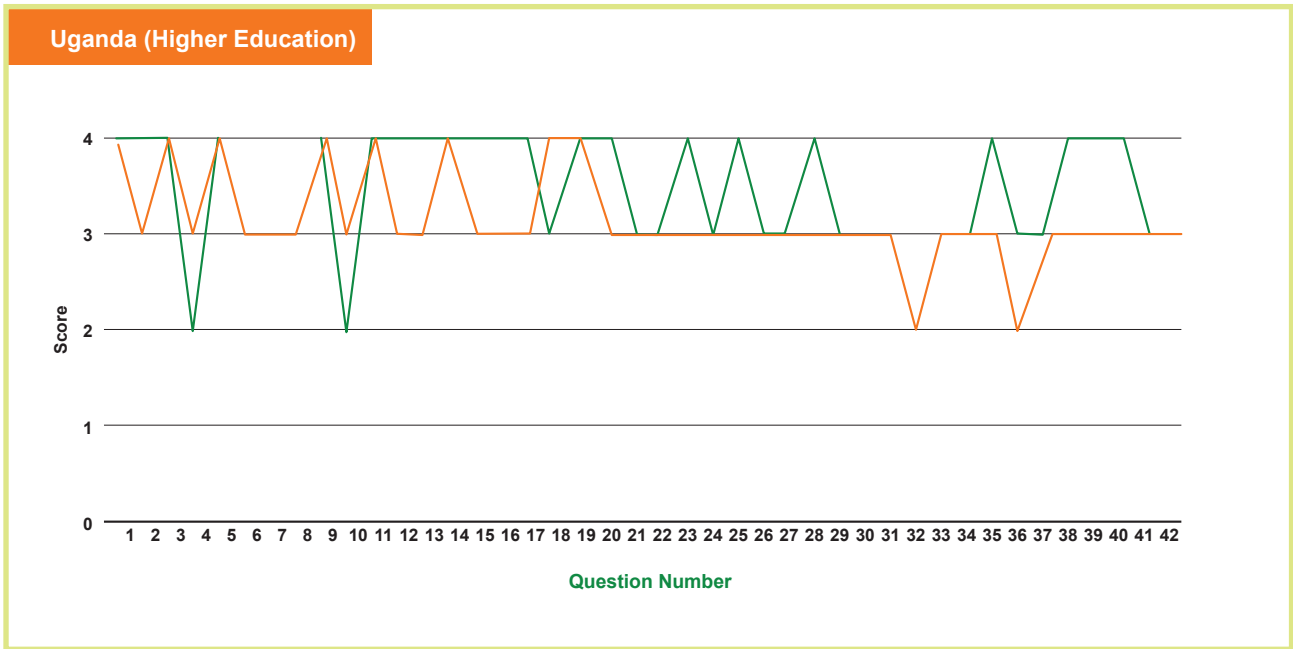
Figure 35: Uganda (Higher Education)

Data analysis: Scores by Uganda (Higher Education) show capacity gaps in areas of staff skills in policy analysis and formulation and staff skills in MEL.

3.4 Main findings of national survey responses

Responses to the self-assessment survey by national partners revealed capacity gaps of these national partners. Country capacity gap profiles have been developed based on these data, as shown above. It may be deduced that priority capacity gap areas that are shared by the 12 analysed countries are mainly: IT infrastructure, MEL system, KM system, staff skills related to MEL, KMS and RM, policy analysis and formulation, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing, brokering partnerships, communication and resource mobilization. Other less frequent capacity areas include computerization of policies and procedures, aligning budget and staffing to strategy and youth and gender mainstreaming.

04

Learning, Communication, and Outreach

It has been agreed to use the CGA exercise to create opportunities for learning, communication, and outreach. Therefore, the following actions have taken place:

1. Letters issued to partners and stakeholders inviting them to participate in the interviews or in the online survey also included briefing on the organization and a concept note on the organizational strategy, CAADP-XP4, the purpose of the CGA and expected results.

2. During the interviews, the interviewer(s) always started with an introduction and background information on the assignment, CAADP-XP4 and the strategy and objectives of the organization.

3. The validation workshop of this report has been planned to first, serve in securing the buy-in of the participants in the assessment and their learning about the organization; and second, to inform the participants about the methodology of the assignment, which may also serve in strengthening their capacities.

4. Later on, webinars could be held to explain the process and methodology to as many partners and stakeholders as possible to promote learning and strengthen capacities. Also, two/three-page summary of the process and its results could be developed and distributed to selected partners.

05

Conclusions and the Way Forward

ASARECA Capacity Gap Assessment (CGA) has been undertaken in support of ASARECA mandate and objectives of its new strategy, and in implementation of Output 1.1 of CAADP-XP4. The CGA assessed the organizational and individual technical and functional capacities of ASARECA Secretariat and its selected regional and national partners as they relate to the achievement of ASARECA new strategy and the outputs of CAADP-XP4. The Assessment used a "system approach" that combined the Nadler Tuschman Congruence Model for Organizational Assessment and Development together with the FAO/TAP Common Framework for Capacity Development for Agricultural and Innovation Systems (CDAIS), the CDAIS 3 capacity dimensions' model, and the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment tool (OCA).

The findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment of ASARECA and its Partners have been presented by category of respondents. Respondents included all Board members, Secretariat staff, and selected development partners/donors, global, regional, and national partners from multiple sectors. The presentation of the gaps followed the CDAIS three domains of organizational capacities: the capacity to organize, to deliver and to relate.

Findings related to ASARECA governance and positioning in the region identified a need for improvement in the level of recognition of ASARECA at the regional and national level, a need to further emphasize the role of ASARECA in promoting agricultural innovation and gender and youth mainstreaming, a need for diversifying channels of communication and of resource mobilization for ASARECA, and a need for strengthening ASARECA's Board role in supporting the achievement of its goals.

Findings related to ASARECA's capacity to deliver and relate indicated a need to complete and operationalize organizational systems and strategies; namely, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of ASARECA, the Knowledge Management System, and the Communication and Branding Strategy and System. Related to the operationalization of these systems, the need to strengthening the technical and functional capacities of the Secretariat staff has been identified. Needed functional capacities included capacities for strategizing and navigating complexity, collaborating, analyzing, reflection and learning, communication, evidence-based advocacy, and adapting to change. Finally, a need for staff motivation schemes and incentives has been expressed, together with a need for adequate staffing of the Secretariat to achieve the new strategy. The reform and staffing of the current HR unit of ASARECA has been suggested to address staff capacity and motivation needs.

Regional and National partners capacity self-assessment revealed gaps related to capacities in promoting and influencing policies, promoting gender and youth mainstreaming, brokering partnerships, communication, and resource mobilization. Organizations also expressed gaps related to their internal systems including their MEL System, KM System, IT System and their finance and administration systems. A separate capacity gap profile has been developed for each of the member countries of ASARECA, detailing their specific capacity needs.

The findings of the capacity gap assessment of ASARECA and its partners forms the basis for developing the Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) of ASARECA. The Plan aims to contribute to the achievement of the goals of ASARECA and the outputs of CAADP-XP4.

PART II

Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) of ASARECA and its Regional and National Partners

Executive Summary

In support of ASARECA mandate and objectives of its new strategy, and also in support of ASARECA Flagship Program CAADP-XP4, a capacity gap assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country partners has been undertaken, to generate a regional synthesis report, and to develop a Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) for ASARECA and its regional and national partners. A theory of change has also been developed to show how the CCCSP will contribute to achieving the goals and mandate of ASARECA.

This CCCSP has six elements of capacity strengthening with action items under each of them. The six elements and their sub-elements are summarized below:

First, strengthening the positioning of ASARECA which includes improving the recognition of ASARECA at the Regional and Country Level, enhancing the level of support of the external environment and positioning ASARECA as a promoter of climate-relevant agricultural technology and innovation, gender and youth mainstreaming, and farmer communities' economic growth.

Second, strengthening ASARECA systems and functions, including the Knowledge Management System, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System, ASARECA Communication and Branding Function, the Policy Analysis, Formulation and Influencing function, and the Administration and Finance function.

Third, strengthening technical and functional capacities of the Secretariat, ensuring that Secretariat staff master the technical capacities that enable them to perform their functions, and also the functional capacities needed to support the mandate of ASARECA. The identification of the functional capacities is based on CDAIS five capacity areas and Peter Senge five disciplines of the learning organization. In addition to strengthening the capacities of its staff, ASARECA will use available expertise in resource mobilisation and human resources to strengthen these functions.

Fourth, strengthening the tools to receive and respond to feedback from partners, also strengthen partnerships and the capacity to broker effective partnerships and the capacity for resource mobilization. Together with the capacity for resource mobilization, ASARECA aims to diversify its sources of funding and to be innovative in finding untapped sources.

Fifth, strengthening ASARECA regional and national partners capacities. These capacities include organizational and institutional capacities as well as technical and functional capacities of individuals in these organizations. The capacity strengthening of ASARECA regional and national partners is based on the capacity gap assessment (CGA) exercise conducted together with the partners and the capacity gaps that have been revealed from this exercise.

Sixth, collaborating to achieve the CCCSP objectives as multiple efforts are needed in this respect. The Board of ASARECA has main responsibilities in addressing the above elements with focus on increasing the visibility of ASARECA and improving its positioning and support at the regional and national level, in resource mobilization and in brokering partnerships. ASARECA leadership in turn will work with the staff and partners to establish ASARECA as a learning organization where information sharing, learning and reflection are the core of the organization and the tool to achieve its objectives.

01

Introduction and Background

This Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) has been developed to support the mandate of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA),and to support the objectives of its new strategy 2019-2028, and the Outputs of its flagship program - CAADP-XP4. This CCCSP is based on a Capacity Gap Assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country partners, and a resulting CGA Synthesis Report. The CCCSPaims to contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of ASARECA's new strategy and CAADP-XP4 Program.

1.1 ASARECA Strategy 2019-2028

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)'s new strategy and results framework 2019-2028 has rebranded and strategically repositioned ASARECA to perform a higher level facilitative, supportive, coordination, convening, partnership brokerage, communication and advocacy role to enhance participatory visioning and action for sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA sub-region, and to deliver specific development outcomes and impact.

1.1.1 ASARECA Vision

A transformed ECA agricultural sector supporting improved livelihoods, sustained economic growth and inclusive development.

1.1.2 ASARECA Mission

To contribute to increased productivity, commercialization, and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector through strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating agricultural research for development in theECA sub region".

1.1.3 ASARECA Core Values and Principles

ASARECA and its partners adhere to the principles of Inclusivity, Accountability, Transparency, Transformative,Sustainability, Subsidiarity, and Integrity.

1.1.4 ASARECA Key Focus Areas

In its strategy 2019-2028, ASARECA selected the following four areas of focus:

- Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration: Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub-region.
- Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations: Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations, and management practices.
- Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions: Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.
- Knowledge and Information Management: Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision making and action.

1.1.5 ASARECA Focus Area on Capacity Strengthening and its Strategic Result Areas

Under ASARECA's Strategic Result Areas, ASARECA described targeted results of its capacity strengthening focus as strengthening and integration of capacities for inclusive stakeholder engagement; strategic visioning and policy formulation; generation, access and utilization of agricultural knowledge and information; and effective institutional development, management and performance monitoring and evaluation. This is aligned to **output 1** of the CAADP-XP4 Program which is about strengthening the capacities of ASARACA partner institutions in competencies required for the successful implementation of the Project. The capacities include technical and organizational capacities in coordination, multi-stakeholder project management, resource mobilization, fiduciary processes, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

1.2 Rationale of the CS Plan

As stated, in support of ASARECA mandate and objectives of the new strategy, and in implementation of Outputs 1.1 and 3.1 of CAADP-XP4, a capacity gap assessment (CGA) for ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and member country level partners has been undertaken, to generate a regional synthesis report of the assessment, and to develop a comprehensive compliance and capacity strengthening (CCCS) plan for ASARECA that will enable the effective and efficient implementation of ASARECA's new strategy and CAADP-XP4 Program by all involved partners at the regional and national level.

In this respect and to develop the CCCSP, the capacities of ASARECA Secretariat and its regional and national partners has been assessed, and the results have been synthesized into a CGA Report that has been used as the base to develop this CCCSP.

1.6 CS Theory of Change

The following Theory of Change explains what changes and impact could result from the development and implementation of a comprehensive compliance and capacity-strengthening plan (CCCSP). The Theory of Change is based on the mandate of ASARECA as expressed in its strategic goals, and on the expected outputs and outcome of CAADP-XP4 Program.

02
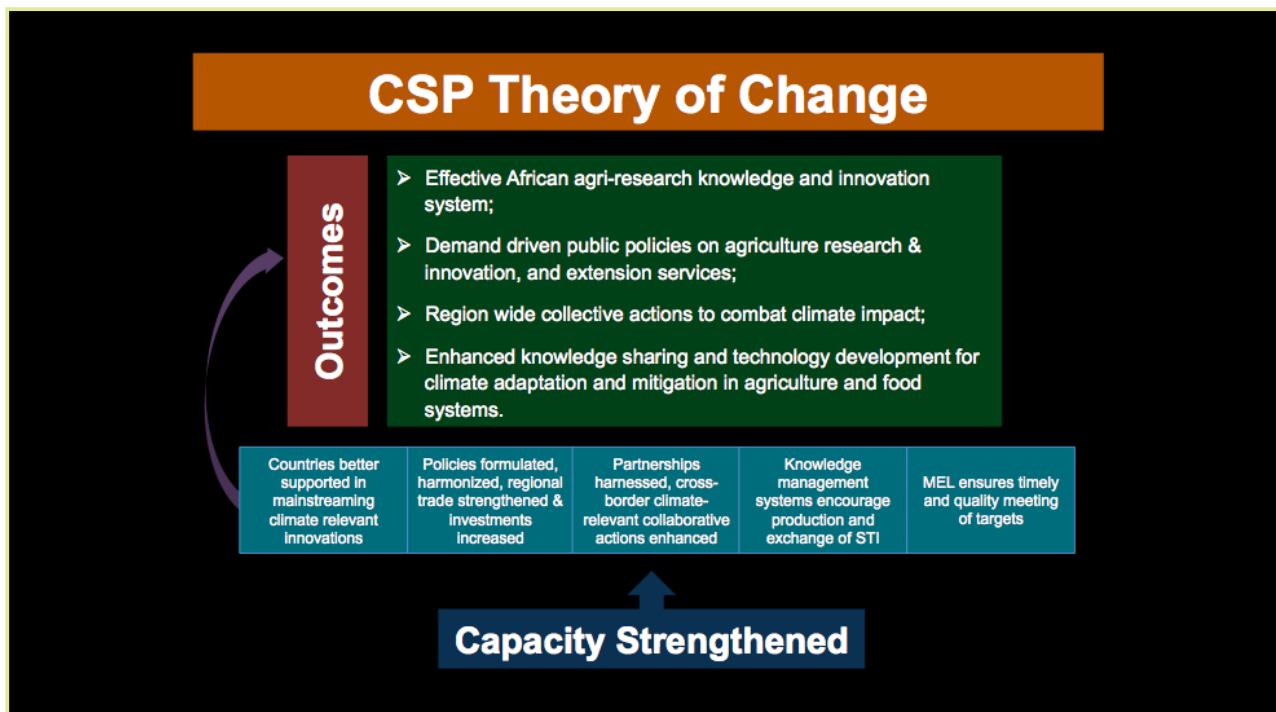
Methodological Approach in Developing the CCCSP

The approach of developing the plan has been a participatory evidence-based approach. In preparation for the development of the plan, a comprehensive capacity gap assessment of ASARECA Secretariat and regional and national partners took place. (Please check a full description of the approach in the CGA Report of ASARECA). This comprehensive and holistic approach identified capacity gaps at the systemic, organizational, and individual levels. ASARECA Board, Secretariat, Development and global partners, regional partners, NARS, and all relevant capacity strengthening stakeholders participated in the identification of gaps at the regional and country level including universities, private sector, famer organizations, civil society, and women organizations, among others. Based on the CGA Report, this CCCSP has been developed and finalized in collaboration with ASARECA partners and stakeholders.

2.1 Findings of the Capacity GAP Assessment (CGA) of ASARECA and its partners

The findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment of ASARECA and its Partners have been presented in the CGA report by category of respondents and followed the CDAIS three domains of organizational capacities: the capacity to organize, to deliver and to relate. Findings from Board and Secretariat interviews identified a need for improvement in the level of recognition of ASARECA at the regional and national level, and a need to further emphasize the role of ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation, and gender and youth mainstreaming. Board and Secretariat also expressed a need for diversifying channels of communication and of resource mobilization for ASARECA.

Secretariat expressed a need to complete and operationalise organizational systems and strategies; namely, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of ASARECA, the Knowledge Management System, and the Communication and Branding Strategy and System. Also, and due to the introduction of these new systems and strategies, Staff expressed a need to strengthen their capacities to contribute to the systems, each in their area of specialization. Capacities identified included technical capacities related to staff functions, and important functional capacities, namely strategizing and navigating complexity, partnering and collaborating, analyzing, reflection and learning, communication, evidence-based advocacy and public influencing, and adapting and responding to changing situations and partners' needs. Staff also expressed a need for motivation schemes and incentives to encourage them to handle the work pressures resulting from the changes and reform that ASARECA is undergoing. The need for adequate staffing of the Secretariat to achieve the new strategy, has also been expressed. It was suggested that innovative means of staffing need to be considered within the budget of the organization. Finally, it was suggested to reform and staff the current HR unit or to use available expertise in HR to advise on HR action, systems and tools that support the organization and staff in maximizing performance towards goal achievement.

Development, global partners recommended that ASARECA strengthens the level of recognition of its role in the region and emphasizes its role in promotion of STIs for climate change. They also recommended that

ASARECA strengthens its communication channels, collaborates with sectors other than its regular partners, and strengthens its influence on policy decision making. Regional partners emphasized the importance of the initiative of ASARECA on Knowledge Management and recommended that ASARECA ensures that partners from different sectors participate and benefit from itsKnowledge and Information Hub.

Regional and National partners capacity self-assessment revealed gaps that needed to be addressed to enable these partners to work with ASARECA on achieving its mandate and strategy in the region. These identified capacity gaps related to the organizations' capacities in promoting and influencing policies, promoting gender and youth mainstreaming, brokering partnerships, communication, and resource mobilization. Organizations also expressed needs for developing internal systems such as their MEL System, KM System, their IT infrastructure, in addition to few institutional, administrative and financial functions and arrangements such as their policies and procedures, the computerization of finance and administrative systems, and aligning their budget and staffing to their strategies.

A separate capacity gap profile has been developed for each member country of ASARECA. Countries included in the CGA profiling were Burundi, DRC, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

As mentioned, the above summarized findings of the Capacity Gap Assessment (CGA) of ASARECA and its partners have formed the base for developing this Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP).

2.1.1 The Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP)

In the last few years, ASARECA has undergone structural and institutional reforms to reposition itself in the region and to be proactive in responding to current and emerging challenges facing agricultural transformation and development in the ECA sub region. ASARECA developed a ten-year Strategy and Results Framework (A-SRF) for the period 2019-2028. ASARECA also redefined its niche and set clear priority areas of focus and articulated areas of comparative advantage for it to remain relevant in the changing AR4D environment. Internally, ASARECA embarked on developing an appropriate organizational structure and operational modalities, and developed its Resource Mobilization and SustainabilityStrategy, its Communication and Branding strategy, and is working on its Partnership Strategy. ASARECA also embarked on reviewing, upgrading, and completing its Knowledge Management System, its Monitoring Evaluation and Learning System and its IT Infrastructure to ensure that these systems support its achievement of its mandate. This CCCSP contributes and adds to these reform effortsand aims to further strengthen the capacities of the systems, functions, structures and individuals to achieve the mandate and goals of ASARECA.

TheCSP has been structured according to the comprehensive approach that has been selected for the CGA and that combines the Nadler Tuschman Congruence model with CDAIS capacity domainsand USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment Model. The Congruence Model requires that the processes and capacities within the organization (CDAIS capacities to organize and deliver) and its relation to the outside world (CDAIS capacity to relate) be in congruence (fit) with its mandate, goals and targeted outputs (Annex 1 details the Nadler Tuschman Congruence Model, CDAIS 5 elements and 3 capacity domains, and USAID OCA).

This CCCSP has six (6) elements of capacity strengthening that reflect the areas of discussions and recommendations of ASARECA Stakeholders during the CGA exercise:

03

Strengthening the Positioning of ASARECA at the Regional and National Level

3.1 Improving Recognition of ASARECA at the Regional and Country Level, and Enhancing the Level of Support of theExternal Environment

In the last few years, ASARECA has gone through a transition period before embarking on its organizational and structural reform. During these years of transition, ASARECA had limited presence and engagement in the region, with few projects on the ground. This transition period may have reduced ASARECA's level of recognition at the regional and country-level. Yet, ASARECA has now completed its reform process, and has started an engagement process through its new strategy implementation framework and through its flagship program, CAADP-XP4. The new strategy positions ASARECA to promote agricultural technology and innovation and gender and youth mainstreaming and to influence policy decision making and be the knowledge hub for the region. Once steps are taken in this direction and resources are available, ASARECA will witness a high-level recognition in the region.

In this regard, ASARECA will take the following steps:

1.   Widen its circle of partners and include a considerable percentage from other sectors namely private sector, farmer organizations, and youth and women organizations.
2.   Use and be strongly active on multiple channels of dissemination of information, especially virtual channels -such as LinkedIn and Twitter-to be always seen by current and potential partners and donors.
3.   Increase ASARECA's engagement with partners at the country and regional levels through the flagship program it now has, but also through other programs it may soon have. Through more engagement with diverse stakeholders, the recognition of ASARECA's role and value in the region will increase.
4.   Roll out the new ASARECA Strategy and start implementing plans, raising resources, sharing knowledge, communicating and being visible, and developing capacities.
5.   Learn from the experience of regional network in different parts of the world regarding how they got recognized without being in position to direct the actions of their partners. Networks – in general – have this big challenge of having to get things done through partners on which they have no authority. Thus, exchange of experience with similar regional networks is vitally important in this regard.
6.   Map the different offices/departments in a country that deal with issues under ASARECA's mandate and establish communicate with each of these offices and not with only one of them, to realize due recognition and support at a countrywide level.
7.   Schedule regular meetings with NARS, Ministers of Agriculture, and national and regional level partners from different sectors, to share knowledge, updates on activities and to promote collective actions related to ASARECA objectives.

8. Efficiently manage available funds and mobilize additional resources to provide the necessary funding to achieve the required positioning of ASARECA as promoter of technology and innovation.
9. Repositioning ASARECA as a Promoter of Climate-Relevant Agricultural Technology and Innovation, Gender and Youth Mainstreaming, and Farmer Communities' Economic Growth

This core role of ASARECA has experienced a recess during the transition years; but is now back and occupies a center place in ASARECA strategy 2019-2028. To strengthen its positioning as a promoter of Agricultural Technology and Innovation, Gender and Youth Mainstreaming and Farmer Communities Economic Growth, ASARECA will:

1. Identify partnership opportunities that may best serve the promotion of climate-relevant agricultural technology and innovation.
2. Bring AR4D institutions together, including public and private sector players and civil society, to leverage complementary skills, capacities, and resources in a coordinated manner to develop climate relevant technologies and innovation.
3. Conduct an inventory of experts and expertise available in the ECA sub region in terms of human resources, facilities, and information databases related to AR4D, and use and supply this information to partners through the KM System
4. Strengthen staff capacity in brokering partnerships on AR4D, so that they may coach and transfer these skills to partner organizations as part of the capacity development of these organizations.
5. Strengthen and enable the Secretariat staff to play assigned roles in promoting agricultural technology and innovation in collaboration with partners at country and regional level through developing staff capacities for communication, navigating complexity, reflection and learning, evidence-based advocacy, and public influencing.
6. Review, if needed, and put into implementation ASARECA gender and youth mainstreaming strategy.
7. Use CAADP-XP4 as a channel to implement ASARECA strategy on gender and youth mainstreaming with its partners.
8. Identify and bring together stakeholder institutions to generate and scale up specific gender responsive and climate- smart technologies and innovation to address identified regional AR4D challenges and take advantage of the available and emerging opportunities.
9. Sensitize Secretariat staff and regional and country-level partners on gender and youth mainstreaming through disseminating research results and communicating on the subject, policy advocacy, and organizing webinars and workshops with partners to follow up on progress.
10. Sensitize & coordinate learning & reflection among ASARECA's Board and Secretariat on gender & youth mainstreaming.
11. Support policy analysis and formulation on gender and youth mainstreaming, and work with regional and country level partners on advocacy and influencing decision making regarding gender and youth mainstreaming, access to productive resources such as land and finances and other.
12. As ASARECA focuses on innovation and commercialization, there should be consideration of gender and youth mainstreaming in these two aspects, as gender and youth are important players in each. For example, the role of youth and women in transforming raw agricultural products to value-added commercial products to strengthen cross-country trade should be emphasized and promoted.
13. Collaborate with available expertise in partner organizations to co-organize activities related to Gender and Youth mainstreaming.

04

Strengthening ASARECA's Organizational Systems and Functions

4.1 ASARECA Knowledge and Information Management System

ASARECA developed a Knowledge and Information (KI) Hub in 2014 linked to the Knowledge Hub-Strategy developed at the same time, and the Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy developed in 2011.It is now a strong demand by the Board that ASARECA focuses on its role in knowledge sharing and dissemination and that it positions itself as the Regional Knowledge and Information Hub." ASARECA has been on a quest to revive this Knowledge Management System through hiring consultants to redesign the system in a way to include more than data base, and to also review ASARECA Knowledge Management Strategy. The current system before redesigning is available through the website of ASARECA and is seen as being heavily accessed by partners. Yet, it documents only less than half the technologies that have been developed in coordination with ASARECA, in the last decade.

Once completed in accordance to its design,the KI Hub should be a learning and innovation think tank for generating, documenting and exchanging knowledge, developing new AR4D concepts and policies, networking, and facilitating learning to strengthen the capacities of ASARECA stakeholders, and influence agricultural related policies and decisions.

The development and populating of the Knowledge and Information Hub is linked to another current project of ASARECA which aims to develop an electronic filing and document management system. This system aims to digitize ASARECA knowledge products and thus enable their uploaded to Knowledge and Information System/ Hub. ASARECA has also a plan to profile knowledge products that exist in the member countries under easy retrievable references, towards a comprehensive regional KI Hub. Engagement with member countries have started regarding joint generation, development, storing and dissemination of knowledge and information. To strengthen this KMI System of ASARECA, the following actions are planned:

Finalize the Knowledge Management Strategy and the establishment of the Regional Knowledge and Information Hub and prioritize them in budget allocation. This will support the value positioning of ASARECA and the regional appreciation and recognition of ASARECA's role in promoting knowledge production and sharing in the region.

4.2 Policy Analysis, Formulation, and Influencing Policy Decision-Making

ASARECA has a past of supporting policy formulation in ECA and leading in developing policy guides and procedures at the regional and country level. Its two former programs have been highly recognized in the region; the Eastern and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis (ECAPAPA) and Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme (PAAP). Yet, during the transition period of ASARECA, in the last few years, there were no channels to go through to engage with partners and to formulate and influence policies. With the reform of ASARECA and the start of CAADP-XP4 program, activities on policy formulation and influencing will be revived.

This year, ASARECA organized dialogues on inclusion of climate-relevant Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) indicators in National Agriculture Investment Plans for directors and commissioners in charge or agricultural policy. ASARECA also designed a plan to review draft National Agriculture Investment Plans prepared by the countries to ensure that climate relevant STI indicators are incorporated. Regional policy dialogues on cross border trade in agricultural commodities and inputs have also been planned, and online articles have been published on priority issues such as: "The triple tragedy of COVID-19, climate change and food insecurity: Policy responses in Africa". Also, training programs for national and regional partners on policy analysis and formulation have been planned.

To strengthen its capacity in policy analysis, formulation & influencing, ASARECA will:

1. Support the identification of critical gaps in national and regional policies, markets, and institutional arrangements, and advocate and coordinate processes for addressing them.
2. Continue to engage the RECs as well as the African Union Commission (AUC) and NEPAD to leverage appropriate convening power. These are key institutions in facilitating adoption of harmonized policies, establishment of functional and structured regional markets and transformative institutional arrangements.
3. Advocate and disseminate information on the importance of harmonizing policies and of transboundary trade and movement of technology, in order to empower countries to collaborate on the matter.
4. Identify standards, practices, norms and institutional arrangements which constrain the performance of AR4D and broker partnerships with public and private sector players to unlock such bottlenecks.
5. Develop the capacities of partners in policy analysis and formulation, and in related functional skills such as critical thinking, system thinking, gender analysis, value chain analysis, learning and reflecting, communication and evidence-based advocacy.
6. Coordinate the establishment among partners of diverse mechanisms and channels for joint action on policy influencing and advocacy.

4.3 Communication System and Communication and Branding Strategy

As mentioned earlier, during ASARECA's transition period, ASARECA did not have projects on the ground and thus its communication with partners was minimal.. This situation has changed as a Communication and Branding Strategy is being developed to establish multiple channels of communication and feedback with the national and regional partners. ASARECA has taken multiple steps to improve its communication tools and documentation systems. This included: developing a Joint Visibility Strategy for CAADP-XP4 together with program partners; developing and implementing media engagement and communication visibility plan for the CAADP-XP4; branding ASARECA for enhanced visibility; regularly updating the website and integrating social media in the marketing plan of ASARECA; developing ASARECA mailing list and online newsletter; ensuring close engagement with mass media and partners for enhanced visibility of ASARECA; and maintaining regular contact with media houses providing them with timely news about ASARECA. To further strengthen its communication capacity, ASARECA will:

1. Finalize the Communication and Branding Strategy with its implementation plan.
2. Develop the capacity of the Secretariat staff to implement the Communication and Branding Strategy through feeding information to the Communication System and through following and applying the branding measures.

3. Strengthen engagement of country-level partners and strengthen their capacities to build a regional communication system where information flows among ASARECA and all its partners.

4. Complete the process of profiling partners on ASARECA's website to allow for exchange among partners and to strengthen partners' recognition of the value added by ASARECA as a convener at regional level.

4.4 Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System

ASARECA has a MEL system that was being further developed into a Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) system; "there is currently a consultant working with the technical staff on this development." The current system reflected systems thinking, aligned with the new strategy of ASARECA and with CAADP-XP4 and was also capable of accommodating incoming programs. There are plans to further upgrade the system to include certain configurations such as GIS, and also plans to complete the five years operational plan of ASARECA with indicators and then to include these indicators into the MEL system so that the system be fully aligned not only with the new ASARECA strategy, but also with its operational plan. There are also plans to link the MEL System to the Financial System, so that MEL reports would include expenditures per MEL indicator. Also, part of the plan explained was that the system Links ASARECA's Finance System to the indicators of the Strategy Implementation Plan and the indicators and targeted outputs of CAADP-XP4 to report expenses per indicator.

To complete these efforts, ASARECA plans to:

1. Start feeding the system with data, to ensure that all ASARECA reports depend on system generated information.

2. Establish the MEL system as a tool to produce reports that may then be used for learning and reflection.

4.5 Administrative and Finance Systems

In order for the above functions to work properly, strengthening the administrative and finance systems of ASARECA to enable them to accommodate to the new demands on these systems is needed. In this regard, ASARECA will:

1. Strengthen the capacities of the Finance department to maximize the use of the computerized integrated Finance System.

2. Simplify the original versions of ASARECA's manuals of policies and procedures into staff-friendly versions that staff may easily refer to for their daily work.

3. Conduct periodical orientation sessions to existing and new staff to refresh their understandings and answer their questions on the different policies and procedures.

4. Implement planned activities related to record management and electronic filing systems, to make policies available on multiple platforms. Develop the capacity of staff in using these electronic filing systems.

05

Staffing and Strengthening the Technical and Functional Capacities of Secretariat Staff

5.1 Strengthening Staff Capacities

ASARECA currently has 11 staff and the Executive Director, in addition to three consultants and one intern. Five of the staff and one consultant have been with ASARECA for ten (10) years or more, while the rest have been appointed during the last two years and a couple have been appointed very recently. Due to the transition period that ASARECA had gone through, and due to the comprehensive reform it has recently undergone, and as skills are short-lived, it is clear that staff of ASARECA need to strengthen their capacities in areas that support the new direction of ASARECA. This applies to staff who have been with ASARECA for years as well as the newcomers. This is especially true, since ASARECA has repositioned itself as convener, facilitator, catalyst, coordinator, communicator and partnership broker in the region, its staff need to possess the relevant skills to carry out these roles.

To strengthen the technical capacities of its staff, ASARECA will:

1. Train staff in feeding data about their functions into the MEL system of ASARECA and in producing reports that support them improve the performance of their functions and reflect and learn jointly on improving their support to ASARECA.
2. Train staff in feeding stories about their functions to the communication channels of ASARECA to disseminate knowledge about ASARECA and increase its recognition and visibility in the region.
3. Train staff in feeding and using the Knowledge and Information Management system of ASARECA to exchange and disseminate relevant knowledge to partners
4. Train staff in simple proposal writing to contribute information about their functions to proposals to different donors and to align proposals with ASARECA's refreshed mandate.
5. Orient staff on ASARECA policies and procedures– including finance, procurement and HR policies and procedures – as they get updated, for them to keep up to date with the changes and apply them efficiently into their functions.

To strengthen the functional capacities of its staff ASARECA will refer to the CDAIS 4+1 capacities, and to Peter Senge[1] 5 elements of a learning organization.

Applying CDAIS 4+1 capacities, ASARECA will strengthen the functional capacities of its staff in:

1. Capacity to Navigate Complexity and to develop a systemic understanding of the relationships among the parts, as environmental and organizational events and changes are not linear. This capacity will surely support the role of ASARECA as a catalyst of change in the region.

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1 Senge, P. M. (2006). The fifth discipline field book: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization. Doublebay/ Currency, NY.

2.   Capacity to Collaborate while managing conflicts, managing diversity,negotiating, building networks, and brokering multi-stakeholder partnerships using multiple communication channels.

3.   Capacity to Reflect and Learn bringing stakeholders together, designing, and leading processes of critical reflection and following a double-loop learning process leading to action and change.

4.   Capacity to Engage in Strategic and Political Processes and to understand, analyze,formulate, and advocate policies and influence decision-making, including mainstreaming youth, women, and vulnerable groups.

5.   Capacity to Adapt and Respond to changes, shifting focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.

Applying Peter Senge's five elements (five disciplines as Senge calls them) of a learning organization, ASARECA will strengthen the following functional capacities of its staff:

1.   Capacity for system thinking, looking at organizations, programs, issues, contexts, as a whole; including, their multiple components and being aware of how a change in one component affects the other.

2.   Capacity for personal mastery, which refers to the commitment by an individual to the process of learning. Learning is more than just acquiring information; it is expanding the ability to be more productive by learning how to apply acquired skills to work situations in the most valuable way. According to Senge, there is a competitive advantage for an organization whose workforce can learn more quickly than the workforce of other organizations.

3.   Capacity to contribute to a shared vision of the organization, through strategic thinking, system thinking, analysis and synthesis, negotiation and influencing decision making.

4.   Capacity to identify and challenge mental models and selective observation and memories.

5.   Capacity for team learning, sharing, and exchanging knowledge.

5.2 Staffing

In addition to strengthening the capacity of its existing staff, ASARECA needs to design and fill new jobs with adequate number of staff to support the achievement of its new strategy. In this regard, and after the strategy stated the objectives and the implementation plan described how to reach them, ASARECA reviewed its organizational chart and identified jobs that are needed in its new phase. To effectively complete this staffing plan, ASARECA will:

1.   Hire the expertise of a resource mobilization expert

2.   Complete the staffing of its communication and branding function, its capacity strengthening, and its policy formulation functions

3.   Hire the expertise of an HR expert to develop tools of management of change, staff motivation and talent management.

06

Strengthening Feedback, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

6.1 Strengthening and Diversifying Channels of Feedback

Multiple channels of feedback exist between ASARECA and its partners, as feedback may come directly to the Management of ASARECA or to a member of Secretariat staff from the NARS or from the country-level focal points. Also, feedback comes through ASARECA social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn, in addition to ASARECA's webpage. Yet, there is a need to record and document this feedback and the response of ASARECA for reflection and learning and to develop demand-driven actions.

In this respect ASARECA will document the current feedback and diversify the channels of feedback through:

1.   Include in the MEL System tools of documenting partners' feedback on ASARECA's activities and ASARECA's response to the feedback.
2.   Report periodically on partner engagement through ASARECA's social media platforms indicating the type of engagement and ASARECA's response to this engagement.
3.   Include in ASARECA's Communication Strategy modalities and diverse tools of receiving feedback and of sensing regional and national priorities.

6.2 Partnering, Resource Mobilization and Diversification of Resources

In this time of new initiatives and transformation of ASARECA, resource mobilization to implement the changes is crucial, and diversifying funding to ensure sustainability of resources is also necessary. ASARECA has stepped forward in this direction and developed and finalized its Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy which also details mechanisms of effective partnerships that support ASARECA achieve its goals. To further strengthen its developed strategy and efforts in resource mobilization, ASARECA will:

1.   Promptly implement the Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy and its implementation plan to provide for effective partnership towards the sustainable diversification of resources.
2.   Leverage on CAADP-XP4 and change the landscape of ASARECA to attract more funds.
3.   Diversify funding sources and target resources that have diverse profile not limiting funding sources to international donors. Other diverse sources of funding could be private sector, endowments, regional donors, foundations etc. Thus, the diversification of resources should not only be reflected in increasing the number of donors, but also reaching to donors with diverse profiles.
4.   Focus proposal writing on proposals that would provide additional funding in support of implementing ASARECA planned actions and minimize proposals that invite a whole set of new actions that distract and burden the staff with additional responsibilities.
5.   Implement channels for brokering partnerships and for resource mobilization described in the Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy of ASARECA and dedicate resources to maintain relationship with donors.

6. Develop an updated ASARECA Partnership strategy that builds on the partnership modalities described in the Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy and further details mechanisms and tools of brokering effective partnerships, the types of needed partnerships, and indicators of success.
7. Schedule periodical sessions to reflect on relations with donors, learn and re-plan
8. Recruit teams that can carry out the above responsibilities.

07

Strengthening the Capacities of Regional and National Partners

ASARECA Regional partners responses to the Self-Assessment section of the CGA Survey revealed capacities that needed strengthening, so that these partner organizations can fully collaborate with ASARECA on achieving shared objectives that are part of ASARECA's mandate. The needed capacities were promoting and influencing policies, promoting gender and youth mainstreaming, collaboration and joint reflection within the organization, aligning organizational budget with strategic plan and funded programs, level of computerization of finance and operating procedures, staff technical skills, procurement policies and procedures alignment with international codes of procurement, IT infrastructure, MEL System, KM System, Brokering partnerships and Resource mobilization.

Responses to the self-assessment survey by national partners in their turn revealed capacity gaps of these national partners. Country capacity gap profiles have been developed based on the data captured from the self assessment survey. It may be deduced that priority capacity gap areas that are shared by the 12 analysed countries are mainly: IT infrastructure, MEL system, KM system, staff skills related to MEL, KMS and RM, policy analysis and formulation, mobilizing partners for policy advocacy and influencing, brokering partnerships, communication and resource mobilization. Other less frequent capacity areas include computerization of policies and procedures, aligning budget and staffing to strategy and youth and gender mainstreaming.

In response to the results of the CGA, and based on the results regarding needed capacities by regional organizations and also in response to the country capacity gap profiles that have been developed as part of the CGA, ASARECA will take the following steps:

1. Discuss with the regional and national partners the prioritising of the capacity gaps and possible modalities of addressing them
2. Develop a work plan with timelines to support partner organizations in addressing these capacity gaps
3. Involve national/regional/local champions in designing and implementing agreed capacity strengthening activities
4. Conduct joint fund-raising with the partner organizations to fund capacity strengthening activities
5. Compile and share lists of experts in the capacity gaps areas.
6. Use multiple capacity strengthening modalities and tools to mend the gaps including, but not limited to, virtual webinars, virtual workshops, coaching, technical assistance in system development, short term technical training, mentorship, expert services, policy advisory service, creation of support networks, facilitation of knowledge and experience exchange, temporary exchange of staff among organizations, and facilitating, South-South, South-North collaboration on capacity strengthening, among others.

08

Collaborating to Achieve the Objectives of the CCCSP

To effectively achieve the objectives of the CCCSP, collaborative efforts of the direct stakeholders are needed. In this respect, the Board and management of ASARECA will play crucial roles externally and internally to ensure that activities are harmonized towards the organizational and individual technical and functional capacity strengthening of ASARECA and its partners.

8.1 ASARECA Board of Directors' Support towards Goal Achievement

ASARECA took firm steps towards building on the strengths of its Board to further promote ASARECA, increase its visibility and support its resource mobilization efforts. ASARECA's Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy details actions to be taken by Board members and provide tools to use in resource mobilization and in increasing visibility. Board members understand their roles and are willing to assume them. To continue to build on the strengths of the Board and to further enable the Board to carry out its role, ASARECA will:

1. Build on the existing diversity of the Board – representing all societal sectors – to reach out to these sectors through members of the Board and disseminate information on ASARECA, suggesting potential partnerships, and mobilizing additional resources.
2. Speed the collaboration of Members of the Board in implementing the new Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy (RMSS) of ASARECA. Use the roadmap for branding the institution and improve its corporate image.
3. Finalize ASARECA's Communication Strategy and its implementation plan in order to provide diversified tools to the Board and Secretariat to communicate with global, regional, and national partners, in order to increase the visibility of ASARECA, promote its strategy and secure additional funding opportunities.
4. Design and adopt diverse channels to strengthen the capacity of Board members in resource mobilization. These channels may include special orientation sessions, participating in proposal preparation or participating in joint resource mobilization activities. Also, continue to periodically orient the new Board on ASARECA's constitution and value proposition, to enable them to support and promote the role of ASARECA in the Region.
5. Further engage Board members with the projects and programs of ASARECA. In addition to regular meetings, Board members could participate in field visits and receive direct input and updates from partners. Meeting with partners in ASARECA projects could also be organized online. This should assist Board members in assessing the complexities of the projects and being introduced to project multi-sector partners all over the region, and not only in their own country. With this level of engagement, the Board can be enabled to represent ASARECA and its goals of promoting research, innovation, policies, programs, and perspectives that support development in the Region.
6. Further engage Board members in the development of funding proposals, and request Board members to include ASARECA as a partner in their own institutions' proposals for funding.

7.   Encourage the Board to promote ASARECA through the different platforms, conferences, meetings, and events at which they participate, and supply them with communication material on ASARECA that they can share with potential members and donors.

8.2 ASARECA Leadership and Establishing the Learning Organization

In times of organizational change and transformation, it is normal for organizations to experience resistance to change, and sometimes demotivation of certain members or conflict among members on the approach to change. The role of leadership becomes essential then to bring organizational members together. ASARECA has progressed on the road of building an organizational culture that understands the change and is willing to take steps to achieve it. In order to strengthen the buying into the change by Secretariat members, the Leadership of ASARECA will:

1.   Nurture an internal environment of learning & reflecting.
2.   Create formal channels for staff to jointly reflect on organizational matters. These formal channels could be management/staff committees; leadership teams; quality circles; organizational learning circles; suggestion boxes or a designated email or online form for suggestions, or online employee feedback surveys.
3.   Promote staff development and growth through diverse channels such as technical and functional skills training, coaching, mentoring by senior staff to newcomers, or temporary secondment to partner organizations.
4.   Ensure that Staff and board members possess -or acquire- CDAIS functional skills and that they can navigate complexity, collaborate, analyze, and reflect, learn, engage in strategic political processes, and adapt and respond to changing situations and partners' needs. (Please review CDAIS components, in the methodology section).
5.   Invest in establishing ASARECA as a learning organization.
6.   Develop supervisory staff management skills including strategic planning, project management, team building and management, negotiation, communication, reflection and learning and conflict resolution.
7.   Establish and institutionalize a conflict resolution process.
8.   Institutionalize team building and team spirit among staff.
9.   Provide space for members of staff to revisit the core values of ASARECA as outlined in its strategy (inclusivity, accountability, transparency, and Integrity) and ensure they are put into practice through the different processes of ASARECA.
10.   Reform and staff the current HR unit to perform a full-fledged HR function, or use available expertise in HR to advise on action and to develop systems and tools described below. The HR unit or contracted expertise will contribute to the strategic planning of the organization; design needed jobs to fulfill the mandate; develop organizational charts to establish inter-relationships among jobs; advise on recruitment and staffing; advise on staff development and growth plans; design and create a learning organization of ASARECA; develop conflict resolution processes; develop team building approaches; design motivation and compensation schemes; and design a comprehensive performance assessment program; among multiple other HR functions that accompany organizations throughout their transformation process.

09

Conclusions and the Way Forward

ASARECA CCCSP has been developed following the Capacity Gap Assessment (CGA) of ASARECA Secretariat and Regional and National Partners. The CCCSP is based on the findings of the CGA. The CCCSP aims to strengthen the capacity of ASARECA and its Regional and National Partners to work jointly and effectively on achieving the mandate of ASARECA and the outputs of CAADP-XP4. The mandate and strategy objectives of ASARECA as well as CAADP-XP4 outputs were designed to respond to the priorities of ASARECA Regional and National Partners.

The Plan has six elements of capacity strengthening related to strengthening the positioning of ASARECA in the region and at country level, strengthening ASARECA systems and functions, strengthening the technical and functional capacities of Secretariat staff and providing the Secretariat with the necessary human resources, strengthening feedback from partners, partnerships and resource mobilization, strengthening regional and national partners capacities and collaborating to achieve the objectives of this plan. An action plan is annexed to this CCCSP detailing the actions that will be implemented to realize the six elements of capacity strengthening, the timeline, responsibilities, and performance indicators. There are 90 actions listed and described under the six elements. These ninety actions will take place over the duration of the Plan between 2019 and 2024.

In order for this plan to succeed, ASARECA needs to strengthen its capacity development unit and to partner with regional, national and global experts to provide the interventions that are necessary for the capacity strengthening. Monitoring, evaluation and learning from this plan and its implementation phases is also necessary to track and measure progress. The capacity strengthening plan, in accordance with the theory of change, will support ASARECA in realizing its mandate in the region.

Annexes

Annex 1: Rationale and Scope of the Assessment – Tasks carried out

To achieve the Rationale of the Assessment described in the first section of this report, the following tasks were carried out:

1. Participate jointly with CAADP-XP4 partners in co-developing the Capacity Gap Assessment Tool

2. Develop an appropriate and robust methodology for carrying out the assignment at the Secretariat level and within the target countries.

3. Develop an implementation plan of the CGA and CCCS Plan outlining clear timeline for the proposed actions.

4. Using the CGA tool co-developed with ASARECA and Agrinatura, carry out actual assessment of the existing capacity gaps and competencies in relation to the successful implementation of CAADP-XP4, at ASARECA and in selected national and regional institutions.

5. Analyse the generated datasets from Board, Secretariat, National and Regional Partners self-assessment, group and individual interviews, and online surveys and polls, synthesize the findings, and assess the current capacities and the existing gaps of ASARECA and its selected regional and country-level partners.

6. Lead the development of draft National Synthesis Reports from each of the targeted countries.

7. Lead the development of draft Regional Synthesis Report comprising findings from the targeted countries.

8. Facilitate a Regional Validation Workshop to be attended by selected participants of the assessment exercise.

9. Following the Regional Validation Workshop, support/backstop the synthesis of the ASARECA Capacity Gap Assessment Report, in collaboration with Agrinatura.

10. Using the findings of the assessment, lead the development of an inclusive Staff Capacity Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan (CCCSP) for ASARECA to support implementation of the CAADP-XP4 project

Annex 2: Approaches that have been combined to for the comprehensive system approach used in the CGA

The TAP Common Framework

The TAP Common Framework emphasizes that agricultural innovation, as opposed to linear approaches, results from a complex, multi-stakeholder process of interaction. Addressing this complexity requires innovation in agriculture and rural development to be based on multi-stakeholder interaction that includes non-conventional stakeholders (e.g. private sector, farmer organizations, non-profit organizations and civil society organizations), to be linked to other sectors, and to possess certain capacities. The framework identifies the following capacities for AIS -through the CDAIS Approach - for AIS to perform effectively, at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels.

CDAIS looks not only at the capacity of each organizational element, but at the level of interconnections among these elements, and how capacities could be strengthened in a way to ensure the effectiveness of these interconnections to mitigate challenges and realize the desired goals. In its interconnections and cohesion assessment approach, CDAIS assesses five capacities:

Capacity to Navigate Complexity		
Capacity to Collaborate	→	Capacity to Adapt and Respond in order to Realize the Potential of Innovation
Capacity to Reflect and Learn		
Capacity to Engage in Strategic & Political Processes		
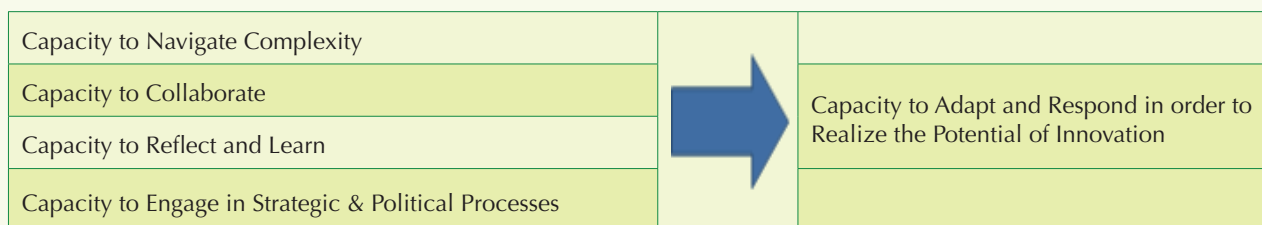
CDAIS 3 Domains

CDAIS 3 Capacity Domains stem from the TAP Common Framework and 4+1 CDAIS capacities and classify the capacities to be assessed under three domains. The capacity to organize, the capacity to deliver, and the capacity to relate. The following diagram illustrates the 3 Domains:

1. To organise. This concerns the internal resources of an organization, i.e. its ability to create a conducive environment for innovative ideas and service delivery. It is affected by the type of leadership, use and management of teams, and investments in staff.
2. To relate. This looks at the organization's relationship with the outside world, i.e. if it is dependent/ independent of, or complimentary with, the other actors; if it has a power to influence or an affirmed legitimacy; and if it frequently exchanges with the outside world and if the nature of these exchanges is defined/clear.
3. To deliver. These are the services and products the organization designed and packaged as innovation support services, i.e. technical know-how, its relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.
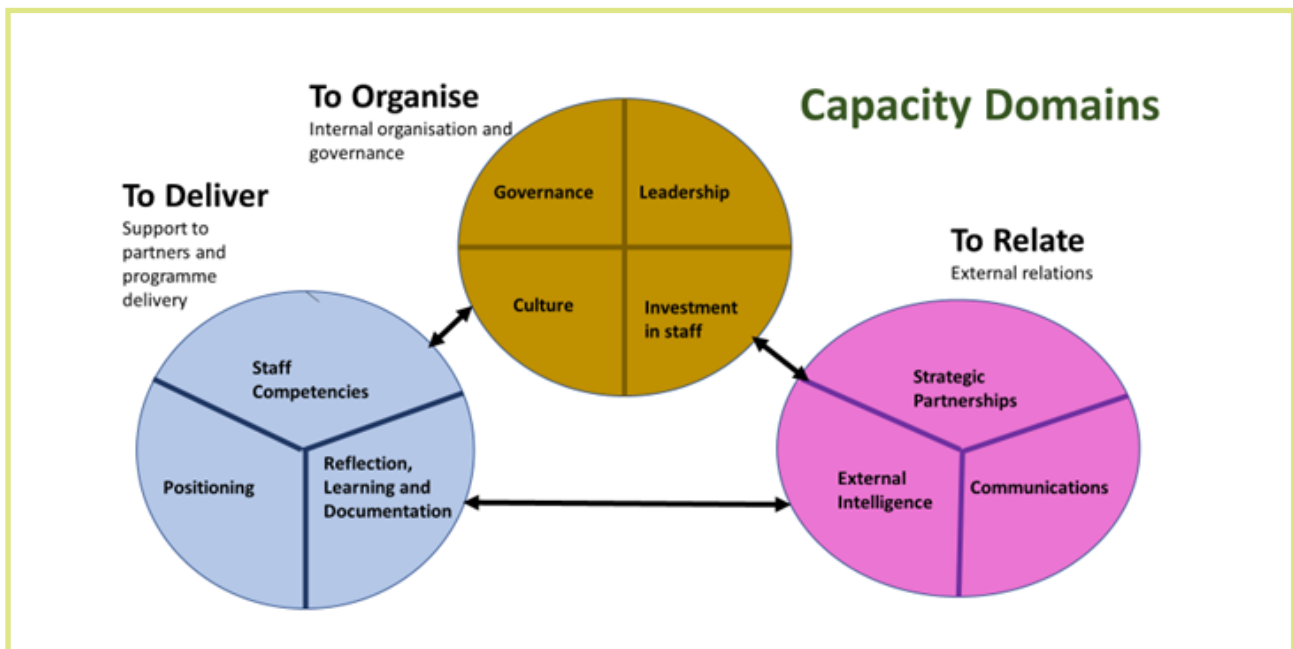
USAID OCA

USAID has also developed and used its Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, which is a structured tool for a facilitated self-assessment of an organization's capacity that helps the organization to reflect on its processes and functions and score itself against benchmarks. The tool scores organizational performance with regards to the following functions such as governance, financial management, administration and procurement systems, HR, Program management and operating policies and procedures including information technology, and organisational sustainability including stakeholder involvement, advocacy and influence, among others.

The seven areas of Organizational Capacity covered in the OCA tool include:

1. Governance and legal structure
2. Financial management and internal control systems
3. Administration and procurement systems
4. Human resources systems
5. Program management
6. Project performance management
7. Organizational management and sustainability

The Nadler-Tuschman Congruence Model

In line with the system and interrelationships approach of CDAIS, the Nadler-Tuschman Congruence Model in turn, is a diagnostic tool for organisations that evaluates - not only each element of the organization against set criteria or benchmark, but mainly - how well these various elements within the organisations are congruent (fit/work) together to serve the vision and goals of the organization. The result of assessing how well the different elements of an organization fit together is the identification of performance gaps (areas where these elements do not fit together and thus hinder achieving organizational goals). These gaps must be closed in order for the organization to work at its maximum potential.

In other words, this N-T model bases its capacity gap assessments on the vision and goals of an organization and then measures how the inputs and processes of the organization may or may not lead to realizing the targeted outputs of the organization.

The Nadler-Tuschman Congruence Model is based on four elements. These elements are work, people, structure, and culture. According to this model, an organisation's performance is the result of the way these elements work together. The model supports identifying performance gaps, allows to compare the current situation with the desired situation and forms an important first step in developing a concrete strategy in order to close the identified performance gaps.

The Nadler-Tuschman Congruence Model
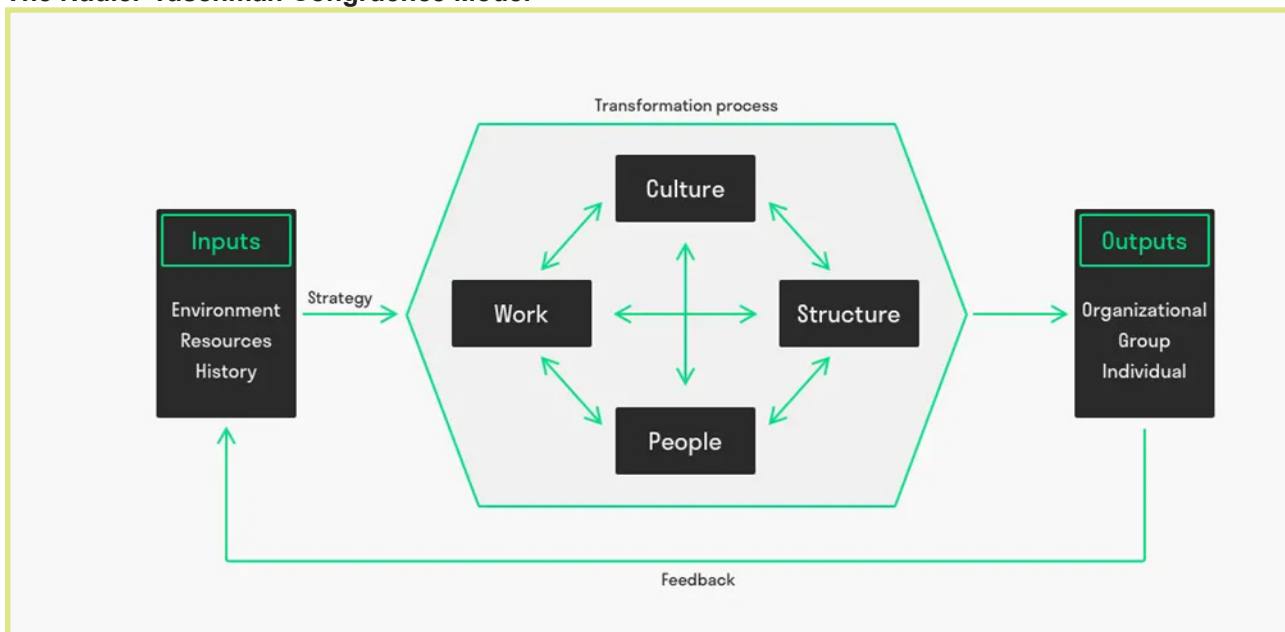
In assessing the inputs, the Nadler-Tuschman model looks at the environment of the organization, its history, its financial resources and infrastructure, and the level of support and recognition it is getting from its environment/ its credibility. Under processes comes i) the technical and functional work done by various departments - work done within the organization and with partners, and how this work/action/activities relates to the goals in the organizational strategy; ii) the people who perform the work and the degree of relevance of their skills to the targeted goals; iii) the organizational structure, governance, reporting levels, policies and procedures and performance management systems and how each of these elements serves or hinders the goals of the organization; and finally iv) the culture of the organization including values and norms, behavioural patterns and unwritten rules, and how they serve or hinder goals achievement. It is under culture that come elements such as whether the organization is a learning organization; the level of internal collaboration; joint leadership and decision making; enabling organizational environment; respect of diversity; and others.

Annex 3: Document Review

The Document Review included:

1.   ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework
2.   Medium Term Operational Plan
3.   Annual Corporate Report 2019
4.   ASARECA 25 Publication – Abridged Version
5.   ASARECA Constitution
6.   ASARECA Review 2016 – ICER Report
7.   EC Forward Looking Review of ASARECA 2018
8.   ASARECA Operations Manual
9.   Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy
10.   List of Board Members, Committees, and Specializations
11.   List of Staff, current positions, and years of employment
12.   ASARECA suggested Organogram
13.   CAADP-XP4 Financial Agreement

Annex 4: CGA Assessment Framework

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
1. CAPACITY TO ORGANIZE			
Governance/ Stakeholder's engagement in, and appreciation of ASARECA's Function			
1. To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its new strategy?	Level of familiarity on a scale of 1 to 4	Board Members, Secretariat, Regional and National partners Other Partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Online Survey
2. To what extent you think the goals of ASARECA reflect the regional and country AIS needs? **Note:** two-pager on the organization and its vision, mission and goals will be distributed with the preparatory questions to the interviews and with the questionnaire. A space for comments on the questionnaire will allow for explaining the answer.	Level of familiarity on a scale of 1 to 4	Board Members, Secretariat, Regional and National partners Other partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Online Survey
3. To what extent is ASARECA's role recognized in the region/country? **Note:** this is mainly about recognition about how the organization positions itself with its partners	Perception of how far the organization's role is recognized scale of 1 to 4	Board Members, Secretariat, Regional and National partners, other stakeholders	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Online Survey
4. Does the environment where ASARECA works support its goals and role? (environment includes national and regional agricultural policies, level of investment in STI, etc.) **Note:** A space for comments on the questionnaire will allow for explaining the answer.	Perception of how far the environment supports the role and work of the organization scale of 1 to 4	Board Members, Secretariat, Regional and National partners, other stakeholders	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Online Survey
ASARECA's level of alignment with its Strategy and CAADP-XP4			
5. Do the mission and goals of ASARECA and the outputs of CAADP-XP4 Program guide ASARECA's programmes, actions/activities with its partners?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
6. Does ASARECA plan its financial and human resources in a way to enable the effective achievement of the goals in its new strategy and the outputs of CAADP-XP4 Program, and other funded programs?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
7. Is ASARECA's Board's composition representative of its stakeholders, and is this composition of the Board ideal to support realizing the strategy and goals of ASARECA?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat, National Partners?	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview Online Survey?

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
8. Is ASARECA's Board supportive of the Association's work?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
9. How far does the Board participate in major actions of ASARECA, i.e. mobilizing resources, partnerships, branding/visibility, external communication, etc.?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
10. Are internal policies and procedures accessible, understood and applied by Board and Secretariat?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview. and Interview
11. How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate impacts of climate change?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat National Partners Other partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and online survey
12. How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming and assessing the different implications on gender and youth of the agricultural policies?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat National partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and Online survey
13. How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, policies and programs that are relevant in the development agenda and community economic growth of its member States?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat National partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and Online survey
Organizational Leadership			
14. To what extent does the leadership of ASARECA use consultative planning and decision-making processes?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board members, Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
15. To what extent does the leadership of ASARECA inspires and motivates staff initiatives about new propositions, decision making within work responsibilities, and risk taking?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
16. Does ASARECA have a good succession plan for a smooth leadership transition?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
Investment in Staff			
17. How far is ASARECA a learning organization, attentive to the learning and capacity development needs of its Secretariat staff and investing in their capacity strengthening	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
18. To what extent is the staff performance assessment process reflective of the goals, objectives, and targeted outputs of its strategy and CAADP-XP4	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
Organizational Culture			
19. How diverse is the staff body of ASARECA? (gender, age, citizenship, ethnicity, language, religion). Please specify in the comments section	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
20. To what extent does the organizational culture accept diversity of staff?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
21. To what extent does the organizational culture encourage collaboration (teamwork) versus competition?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
22. How well are individual and group conflicts managed within the organization?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
23. How well is information shared across different departments?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
24. To what extent does ASARECA adapt to changes in the internal and external environments?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section	Board Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview

2. CAPACITY TO DELIVER

Financial Management/Staff competencies/ Technical Skills			
25. To what extent is ASARECA's core Budget aligned with ASARECA's strategic plan and reflects it?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
26. How far is ASARECA's Budget process inclusive and transparent?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
27. How clear is the separation between core budget and project budgets?/ Operating Budget and Investment Budget?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
28. To what extent are the multi-year incoming funds and expenditure projections accurate?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
29. To what extent are operating policies and procedures computerized?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
30. To what extent are the technical skills of the current Finance staff of ASARECA adequate to those required to realize its strategy, and funded programs and CAADP-XP4 financial monitoring and reporting?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
31. Are procurement policies and procedures well understood and applied by all members of the Secretariat?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
Human Resources Management/Staff Competencies/Technical Skills			
32. How transparent are the HR policies and procedures?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
33. To what extent are the current staff positions, job descriptions and reporting levels aligned to the Strategy of ASARECA and CAADP-XP4 Program?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
34. To what extent have staff professional development needs been identified and met, with regard to realizing ASARECA's strategy goals, and CAADP-XP4?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
HRM/ Staff Competencies/ Functional (Soft) Skills			
35. How far do staff possess skills to interact with colleagues, internal teams, and partners	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
36. Do staff possess and apply capacity to lead collaborative work at the organization and projects/ programme level, including conflict resolution and achieving collective results?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat National partners	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview Online survey?
37. How far can staff engage in strategic and political processes led by governments to influence policy decision making?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
38. Are staff trained in facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms to exchange expertise and agree on collective actions among the participants from different countries and organizations?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
39. How far are staff trained to mobilize resources to ASARECA including writing proposals to diverse donors?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
Reflection, Learning and Documentation			
40. To what extent do formal "internal" communication channels and mechanisms exist and are effective to reflect and learn across departments of ASARECA?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
41. To what extent do formal "external" communication channels exist and are effective for exchange and learning with partners	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview
42. Are there established mechanisms to document the innovation process and share results, that can then be used for joint learning and reflection?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
Knowledge Management			
43. How far is the current knowledge management system of ASARECA supportive of realizing its strategy and facilitating access to, and exchange of most up to date knowledge and expertise among its partners?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Regional and National partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview and online survey
44. How far are staff members aware of the multiple sources of knowledge that feed the innovation process, including the value of local knowledge?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
Information Technology			
45. To what extent are IT systems capable of sustaining current operation and expected growth?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
Communication Skills			
46. To what extent are staff skilled for communications with partners, advocacy, policy analysis and formulation?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat, Regional and national partners	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview and online survey
47. To what extent are staff skilled in mobilizing partners for advocacy and impacting policy making, including policy harmonization?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat, regional and national partners	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview, and online survey
MEL			
48. Is the current MEL system aligned with the strategy of ASARECA, i.e. do the elements of the current ASARECA MEL system measure progress in achieving the objectives of its strategy and its funded programs?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
49. Does the MEL system allow for learning and building a learning organization?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
50. Is service provision/technical assistance to partners regularly monitored by the existing MEL System?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
Positioning			
51. How far is the MEL system computerized?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
52. Do ASARECA staff possess the needed skills to manage, apply and get results from the current/ targeted MEL system?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
53. Are channels of feedback from national partners established, transparent and used?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Regional and National partners, Other partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview, and online survey
54. To what extend does ASARECA respond to needs of national partners?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board Secretariat Regional and National partners, Donors Other partners?	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and online survey

2. CAPACITY TO RELATE			
Strategic Partnerships			
55. To what extent are staff skilled in brokering partnerships at the regional and national levels	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
56. To what extent does ASARECA apply its written "policies and procedures for stakeholder involvement"? **Note:** If ASARECA does not have written procedures for stakeholder involvement, the respondent should indicate that this is not applicable.	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview

Assessment Questions	Indicator(s)	Data Source	Data Collection method(s)
External Sensitivity			
57. To what extent does ASARECA current strategy reflect and fit into the regional priorities?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board Secretariat Regional and National partners, Other partners?	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and online survey
58. To what extend does ASARECA have diversified channels to sense the regional priorities and required changes?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board Secretariat	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
External Communication			
59. How effective is ASARECA's Communication with other organizations that are partner in CAADP-XP4?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview
60. How far are ASARECA's vision, mission and new strategy communicated in public communication materials?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Regional and National partners, Donors Other partners?	Preparatory Survey to the interview, Interview, and online survey
61. To what extent does ASARECA uses its communication channels to have a significant influence on the formulation and implementation of government policies at the national level?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat National partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview, and online survey
62. How far does ASARECA uses its communication channels to impact the public view, especially regarding Climate-relevant STI?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Secretariat Regional and national partners Other partners Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, interview, and online survey
Resource Mobilization			
63. To what extent is ASARECA able to diversify its funding sources? (The minimum would be having three separate funding sources)	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and Interview
64. How pertinent is ASARECA's current resource mobilization plan to its strategy, objectives and programs?	Answer on a scale of 1 to 4 and comments in the "comments section"	Board Secretariat Donors	Preparatory Survey to the interview, and interview

Annex 5: Board and Secretariat interview methodology and procedures

Interviews took place with all Board members and Secretariat staff. Interviews were held online, using the Zoom Platform. Prior to the interviews, interviewees received from ASARECA an invitation to participate, a concept note explaining the purpose of the interview and the CGA exercise, and a set of developed interview questions with 4-points measure of quality rating scale. Interviewees were asked to reflect upon the questions, and to allocate scores from 1 to 4 to each question, in preparation for the interview. Twenty questions were developed for the preparatory questions for the interview, while sixty questions were developed as preparatory questions for the Secretariat staff interview.

On the actual interview session, interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview again and then asked to use the scoring they allocated to the preparatory questions in answering the questions that were presented to them through a Polling system on Zoom. Once all participants answered all questions, they were then shown the average response to each question. Discussions then started with the questions that were scored low by most interviewees (questions given scores of 1 or 2). Discussions then proceeded to other questions, and then the floor was open for free contributions in discussing gaps and recommendations for improvement. This semi-structured focus group interview approach allowed for identifying the gaps, discussing their causes, mutual learning and joint contribution from interviewees, and building up recommendations for improvement together. During these group interviews, some interviewees have been identified and selected for a second round of one-to-one interviews, to probe further into some of the sensitive issues that were brought during the focus group interview or since they have been identified as having special experience on a discussed matter.

Interviews have thus used semi-structured questions that collected information and opinion on the performance of elements identified in the comprehensive assessment approach as described above. The set of questions have been finalized and agreed upon by all involved parties before the interviews; yet flexibility in application was allowed to accommodate the type of interviewees, the areas that come out as needing further probing, and the areas the interviewees would prove more knowledgeable about.

Annex 6: Board pre-interview poll questions

Board Interview Questions

Please score each question using a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 being the lowest score, and 4 the highest). In addition, please prepare to discuss with other interview participants any gaps you think do exist, and your recommendations to address them. If you don't have a specific answer to any of the questions, please check NA.

Score Definitions

1 = Unsatisfactory level (This shows that the extent/level of the question/statement posed is very weak and unsatisfactory ➔ 0 to 40%)

2 = Needs Improvement (This shows that the work is being done, but not to a satisfactory level and thus needs to improve ➔ 41 – 60%)

3 = Satisfactory level (This shows that the extent/level indicated by the question/statement is okay, i.e. doing the average expected ➔ 61 – 85%)

4= Highly Satisfactory level (This shows the extent/level shown regarding each question / statement exceeds expectations ➔ 85 – 100%)

	Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	N/A
1	To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its Strategy as well as its Medium-Term Operational Plan?					
2	To what extent do you think the goals and objectives of ASARECA reflect the regional and country needs?					
3	To what extent is ASARECA's role and actions recognized in the region/country?					
4	Does the environment where ASARECA work support its goals and role? (environment includes national and regional agricultural policies, level of investment in STI, etc.)					
5	Do the mission and goals of ASARECA and the outputs of CAADP-XP4 guide ASARECA's programmes, actions / activities with its partners?					
6	Does ASARECA plan its financial and human resources in a way to enable the effective achievement of the goals in its new strategy and the outputs of CAADP-XP4?					
7	Is ASARECA's Board's composition representative of its stakeholders, and is this composition of the Board ideal to support realizing the strategy and goals of ASARECA?					
8	How far does the Board participate in major actions of ASARECA (i.e. mobilizing resources and partnerships?)					
9	Are internal policies and procedures accessible, understood and applied by Board and Secretariat?					
10	How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovations that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate impacts of climate change?					
11	How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming in its work?					
12	How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, policies and programs that result in decent work and economic growth?					
13	To what extent does the leadership of ASARECA use consultative planning and decision-making processes?					
14	Does ASARECA have a good succession plan for a smooth leadership transition?					

Survey Questions		1	2	3	4	N/A
15	To what extent does ASARECA adapt to changes in the internal and external environments?					
16	To what extent does ASARECA respond to prioritized needs of the national partners?					
17	To what extent does ASARECA have diversified channels to identify/sense the regional priorities and required changes?					
18	To what extent does ASARECA's current Strategy and Medium-Term Operational Plan reflect and fit into the regional priorities?					
19	To what extent is ASARECA able to diversify its funding sources? (The minimum would be having three separate funding sources)					
20	How pertinent is ASARECA's current Resource Mobilization Plan to its Strategy and objectives?					

Annex 7: Secretariat pre-interview poll questions

Secretariat Interview Questions: Please score each question: 1 to 4 (1 being the lowest score and 4 the highest), and prepare to discuss, with other interview participants - during the interview session, any gaps and your recommendations to address them. Follow the scoring guide below.

Scoring guide:

1 = Unsatisfactory level (Extent/level is very weak and unsatisfactory = 0 to 40%)
2 = Needs Improvement (work is being done but not to a satisfactory level and needs to improve = 40-60%)
3 = Satisfactory level (Extent/level is ok, doing the average expected = 60-85%)
4= Highly Satisfactory level (Extent/level, exceeds expectations - 85-100%)

N/A= If the question is in an area outside your domain, or you do not have a specific response to the question

	Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	N/A
1	To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its strategy?					
2	To what extent you think the goals of ASARECA reflect the regional and country AIS needs?					
3	To what extent is ASARECA's role and actions recognized in the region/country?					
4	Do the mission and goals of ASARECA and the outputs of CAADP-XP4 guide ASARECA's programmes, actions/activities with its partners?					
5	Is ASARECA Board's composition representative of its stakeholders, and is this composition of the Board ideal to support realizing the goals of ASARECA?					
6	Is ASARECA Board supportive of your work?					
7	How far does the Board participate in major actions of ASARECA, i.e. mobilizing resources, visibility, branding & partnerships?					
8	How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology, innovation and practices that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate impacts of climate change?					
9	How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming and assessing the different implications on gender and youth of the agricultural policies?					
10	How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, policies and programs relevant to its member States developmental goals and community economic growth?					
11	To what extent does the leadership of ASARECA use consultative planning and decision-making processes?					
12	To what extent does the leadership of ASARECA inspires and motivates staff initiatives about new propositions, decision making within work responsibilities, and risk taking?					
13	Does ASARECA have a good succession plan for a smooth leadership transition?					
14	How far is ASARECA a learning organization, attentive to the learning and capacity development needs of its Secretariat staff and investing in their capacity strengthening?					
15	How diverse is the staff body of ASARECA? (gender, age, citizenship, ethnicity, language, religion).					
16	To what extent does the organizational culture accept diversity of staff?					

Survey Questions		1	2	3	4	N/A
17	To what extent does the organizational culture encourage collaboration (teamwork) versus competition?					
18	How well are individual and group conflicts managed within the organization?					
19	How well is information shared across different departments?					
20	To what extent does ASARECA adapt to changes in the internal and external environments?					
21	To what extent is ASARECA's core Budget aligned with ASARECA's strategic plan and reflects it?					
22	How far is the Budget process inclusive and transparent?					
23	How clear is the separation between core budget and project budgets? Operation budget vs Investment budget?					
24	To what extent are the multi-year incoming funds and expenditure projections accurate?					
25	To what extent are finance and operating policies and procedures computerized?					
26	Are internal policies and procedures accessible, understood and applied by Secretariat?					
27	To what extent are the technical skills of the current Finance staff adequate to those required to realize the strategy and CAADP-XP4 financial monitoring and reporting?					
28	Are procurement policies and procedures well understood and applied by all members of the Secretariat?					
29	Is the current MEL system aligned with the strategy of ASARECA, i.e. do the elements of the current ASARECA MEL system measure progress in achieving the objectives of the strategy?					
30	Does the MEL system allow for learning and building a learning organization?					
31	Is service provision/technical assistance to partners regularly monitored by the existing MEL system?					
32	How far is the MEL system computerized?					
33	Do ASARECA staff possess the needed skills to manage, apply and get results from the current/targeted MEL system?					
34	How transparent are the HR policies and procedures?					
35	To what extent are the current staff positions, job descriptions and reporting levels aligned to the Strategy of ASARECA and CAADP-XP4?					
36	To what extent have staff professional development needs been identified and met, with regard to realizing ASARECA's strategy goals, and CAADP-XP4?					
37	To what extent is the staff performance assessment process reflective of the goals, objectives, and targeted outputs of its strategy & CAADP-XP4?					
38	Does ASARECA plan its financial and human resources in a way to correspond and enable the effective achievement of the goals in its new strategy and the outputs of CAADP-XP4?					
39	How far do staff possess skills to interact with colleagues, internal teams, and partners?					
40	Do staff possess and apply capacity to lead collaborative work, including conflict resolution and achieving collective results?					
41	How far do staff engage in strategic processes led by regional and national partners including governments to influence policy decision making?					

Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	N/A
42	To what extent are staff skilled for mobilizing partners for advocacy and policy formulation?					
43	Are staff trained/skilled in facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms to exchange expertise and agree on collective actions among the participants from different countries and organizations?					
44	To what extent are staff skilled in brokering partnerships at the regional and national levels?					
45	How far are staff trained/skilled to mobilize resources to ASARECA including writing diverse proposals?					
46	How far is the current Knowledge Management System and infrastructure of ASARECA supportive of facilitating access to, and exchange of, knowledge & expertise among its partners?					
47	To what extent are IT systems capable of sustaining current operation and expected growth?					
48	Does ASARECA have the required IT infrastructure to execute its operation and deliver its services?					
49	Do formal "internal" communication channels and mechanisms exist and are effective to reflect and learn across departments of ASARECA?					
50	Do formal "external" communication channels and mechanisms exist and are effective to reflect and learn across departments of ASARECA?					
51	Are channels of feedback from national partners established, transparent and used regularly?					
52	Does ASARECA responds timely for partners' feedback?					
53	To what extent does ASARECA have diversified channels to sense the regional priorities and required changes?					
54	How effective is ASARECA's Communication with other organizations that are partner in CAADP-XP4?					
55	How far are ASARECA's vision, mission and new strategy communicated in public communication materials?					
56	How far does ASARECA use its communication channels to impact the public view, especially regarding Climate-relevant STI?					
57	How far is ASARECA committed to sustainability of its programs? i.e. does ASARECA have a resource sustainability and resource mobilization strategy?					
58	To what extent is ASARECA able to diversify its funding sources? (The minimum is three separate funding sources)					
59	How pertinent is ASARECA's current resource mobilization plan to its strategy and objectives?					
60	Does the environment where ASARECA works support its goals and role? (Environment includes national and regional agricultural policies, level of investment in Science, Technology and Innovation, etc.)					

Annex 8: National and Regional Partners' Survey Questions

National and Regional Partners Survey Questions

The supra agricultural research for development (AR4D) institutions comprising African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), Center for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), and Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Asia (ASARECA), are currently implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme ex-Pillar 4 (CAADP-XP4) Project. This Agricultural Research and Innovation Programme falls under the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative. The Programme is financially supported by the European Union (EU) and is managed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for a period of 54 months starting November 2019.

The CAADP-XP4 Programme supports a science-led and climate-relevant agricultural transformation in Africa through aiming to realize five outputs, namely:

1.   Strengthened capacities of African institutions for successful implementation of shared objectives.
2.   Multi-stakeholder partnerships for innovation established and in operation.
3.   Strengthened policies in support of climate-relevant agriculture and food systems transformation, investments, advocacy, and increased market linkages.
4.   Established knowledge management (KM) and communication systems for decision making and sharing of innovation and for advocacy related to climate relevant agriculture transformation.
5.   Enhanced planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and learning and reporting among partners and multiple stakeholders.

This survey is part of a Capacity Gap Assessment exercise that will lead to the development of a Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan to be used in strengthening the capacity of national and regional partners, in fulfillment of Output 1 above.

The survey has two parts. The first part aims at the evaluation of ASARECA's contribution to your organization, while the second part is a self assessment of your own organizational capacities, to identify areas/gaps where ASARECA can further support you in strengthening your capacities.

Please follow the scoring guide below.

Scoring guide:
1 = Unsatisfactory level (Extent/level is very weak and unsatisfactory = 0 to 40%)
2 = Needs Improvement (work is being done but not to a satisfactory level and needs to improve = 40-60%)
3 = Satisfactory level (Extent/level is ok, doing the average expected = 60-85%)
4= Highly Satisfactory level (Extent/level, exceeds expectations - 85-100%)

N/A= If the question is in an area outside your domain, or you do not have a specific response to the question

Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	N/A
Part 1 of the Survey: Evaluating ASARECA's contributions to the regional and national level partners					
1 To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its strategy?					
2 To what extent you think the priority actions of ASARECA reflect the regional/country-level Agricultural Innovation priorities and needs?					
3 To what extent is ASARECA' role and actions recognized in the region/country?					
4 How do you rate the level of your engagement in planning and joint activities with ASARECA?					
5 How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural technology and innovation that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and support climate-relevant sustainable agricultural transformation?					
6 How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming and assessing the different implications on gender and youth of the agricultural policies?					
7 How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, policies and programs that support regional and country-level developmental efforts and community economic growth?					
8 How far is the current knowledge management (KM) system of ASARECA facilitating access to, and exchange of up-to-date knowledge and expertise among its regional and national-level partners?					
9 Are channels of feedback from national partners established, transparent and used regularly by ASARECA?					
10 How far is ASARECA's mandate and strategy communicated to you in communication materials?					
11 To what extent does ASARECA uses its communication channels to have a significant influence on the formulation and implementation of government policies at the national level?					
12 How far does ASARECA uses its communication channels to support you in impacting the public view, especially regarding Climate-relevant Science, Technology, and Innovation?					
Part 2 of the Survey - self assessment by the regional/national partner to identify own capacity gaps that ASARECA may support in strengthening					
1 To what extent does the declared goals and objectives of your organization guide your organization's programmes and activities with your partners?					
2 How do you rate your organization's engagement in promoting and influencing policies towards the use of science and innovation towards a climate-relevant sustainable transformation of agriculture in the region?					
3 How do you rate your organization's engagement in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming (ex. Promoting entrepreneurship, capacity strengthening, producing knowledge on youth and women roles and needs in the agri-food systems, etc.)					
4 To what extent does your organizational culture encourage collaboration, joint reflection and learning versus competition?					
5 To what extent is your organization's Budget aligned with your organization's strategic plan and your funded programs?					
6 How clear is the separation between core budget and project budgets?					
7 To what extent are finance and operating policies and procedures computerized?					
8 To what extent are the technical skills of the current Finance staff adequate to those required to realize your funded programs' financial monitoring and reporting?					

Survey Questions		1	2	3	4	N/A
9	How far do procurement policies and procedures align with international codes and processes of procurement?					
10	To what extent are IT systems capable of sustaining joint programs with partners, and organizational expected growth?					
11	To what extent are the current staff positions, job descriptions and reporting levels aligned to the Strategy of your organization and your funded programs?					
12	To what extent is the staff performance assessment process reflective of the goals, objectives, and targeted outputs of the organizational objectives?					
13	Is the current MEL system aligned with the strategy of your organization, i.e. do the elements of the current MEL system measure progress in achieving the targeted outputs of your strategy?					
14	How far is the MEL system computerized?					
15	Does your organization have the needed IT infrastructure to execute its operations and engage in joint programs with partners?					
16	How far does your Knowledge Management System provide open access to available knowledge and expertise to your organization and your partners?					
17	How far is your Knowledge Management System (KMS) compatible with KMS or your partner organizations, in a way that you may manage and share knowledge jointly?					
18	How far are staff skilled to engage in strategic planning and processes led by national governments?					
19	How far are staff trained to mobilize partners for policy advocacy and to influence policy decision-making and change?					
20	How far are staff skilled in policy analysis and formulation?					
21	Are staff trained in brokering multi-stakeholder innovation partnerships to share knowledge and act collectively on agricultural innovation?					
22	Are staff trained to link and interact with partners' teams that are diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender?					
23	How far are staff trained to use you Knowledge Management System to facilitate joint production and sharing of knowledge among regional and national partners?					
24	How far are staff skilled in using your Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System to allow for documenting, capitalizing and sharing of experiences and building a learning organization?					
25	How far are staff trained to mobilize resources for your organization including writing proposals to diverse donors, management of competitive grant schemes, and advocating and representing your organization with donors?					
26	To what extent does your organization have diversified channels to sense the regional priorities and required changes?					
27	Do formal "external" communication channels exist and are used effectively by your organization for exchange and learning with partners?					
28	Are there established mechanisms to document the innovation process and share results, that can then be used for joint learning and reflection?					
29	How pertinent is your organization's current resource mobilization and diversification plan to its strategy and objectives?					
30	How pertinent is your organization's current resource mobilization and diversification plan to its strategy and objectives?					
31	Is your organization able to diversify its funding sources in a way to secure sustainable funding to implement its programs?					

End of Survey

Annex 9: Donor Survey

Survey Addressed to ASARECA's Donors

This survey aims at evaluating ASARECA's performance on its funded programs related to promoting sustainable and climate relevant agricultural innovation systems. The purpose of the assessment survey is to identify areas/capacity gaps that ASARECA can then work on strengthening. The outcome of this survey will be for ASARECA to develop a Comprehensive Compliance and Capacity Strengthening Plan to strengthen ASARECA's Board, Secretariat and National Partners capacities to achieve a science-based climate relevant agricultural transformation in the Region.

Please score each question: 1 to 4 (following the scoring guide below). If your score is 1 or 2, you will be prompted with a comment field where you may explain your score and recommend action to address the gap.

Scoring guide:

1 = Unsatisfactory level (Extent/level is very weak and unsatisfactory = 0 to 40%)
2 = Needs Improvement (work is being done but not to a satisfactory level and needs to improve = 40-60%)
3 = Satisfactory level (Extent/level is ok, doing the average expected = 60-85%)
4= Highly Satisfactory level (Extent/level, exceeds expectations - 85-100%)

N/A= If the question is in an area outside your domain, or you do not have a specific response to the question, please select NA

Survey Questions		1	2	3	4	N/A
Part 1 of the Survey: Evaluating ASARECA's contributions to goals of promoting sustainable and climate relevant agricultural innovation systems of the regional and national level partners						
1	To what extent are you familiar with the goals and objectives of ASARECA as described in its strategy?					
2	To what extent you think the goals, objectives, and action of ASARECA reflect the regional and country AIS needs?					
3	To what extent you think ASARECA's role and actions are recognized in the region/country?					
4	Do you think the environment where ASARECA works supports its goals and role? (Environment includes national and regional agricultural and market policies, level of investment in Science, Technology, and Innovation, etc.)					
5	How successful is ASARECA in facilitating and coordinating Effective Partnerships among diverse regional and national partners/sectors over collaborative actions and programs to transform agriculture in the region?					
6	How successful is ASARECA in promoting agricultural Science, technology, and innovation (STI) that contribute to ending hunger, improve nutrition and mitigate impacts of climate change?					
7	How successful is ASARECA in promoting gender and youth mainstreaming and assessing the different implications on gender and youth of the agricultural policies?					
8	How successful is ASARECA in promoting research, national and regional policies, and programs related to its member States developmental goals and community economic growth?					
9	To what extent does ASARECA adapt to changes in the internal and external environments?					

Survey Questions		1	2	3	4	N/A
10	Does ASARECA plan its financial and human resources in a way to enable the effective achievement of the goals in its new strategy and the outputs of CAADP-XP4 Program, and other funded programs?					
11	To what extent you find the technical skills of the current Program and Finance staff of ASARECA adequate to the skills required to implement the funded programs and monitor and report on them, including CAADP-XP4?					
12	How far is the current knowledge management system of ASARECA supportive of realizing its strategy and facilitating access to, and exchange of most up to date knowledge and expertise among its partners?					
13	Is the current MEL system aligned with the strategy of ASARECA, i.e. do the elements of the current ASARECA MEL system measure progress in achieving the objectives of its strategy and its funded programs?					
14	To what extent do formal "external" communication channels exist and are effective for exchange and learning between ASARECA and its partners?					
15	How far are ASARECA' vision, mission, strategy, actions and news communicated to you in communication materials?					
16	To what extent does ASARECA uses its communication channels to have a significant influence on the formulation of government policies and on impacting public view, especially regarding climate-relevant sustainable agricultural transformation?					
17	How far does ASARECA uses its communication channels to impact the public view, especially regarding Climate-relevant STI?					
18	How pertinent is ASARECA's current resource mobilization plan to its strategy, objectives, and programs?					

End of Survey

ASARECA

CAADP | XP4 PROJECT

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