

Results and lessons from STDF Projects: A Meta-Evaluation

STDF Working Group

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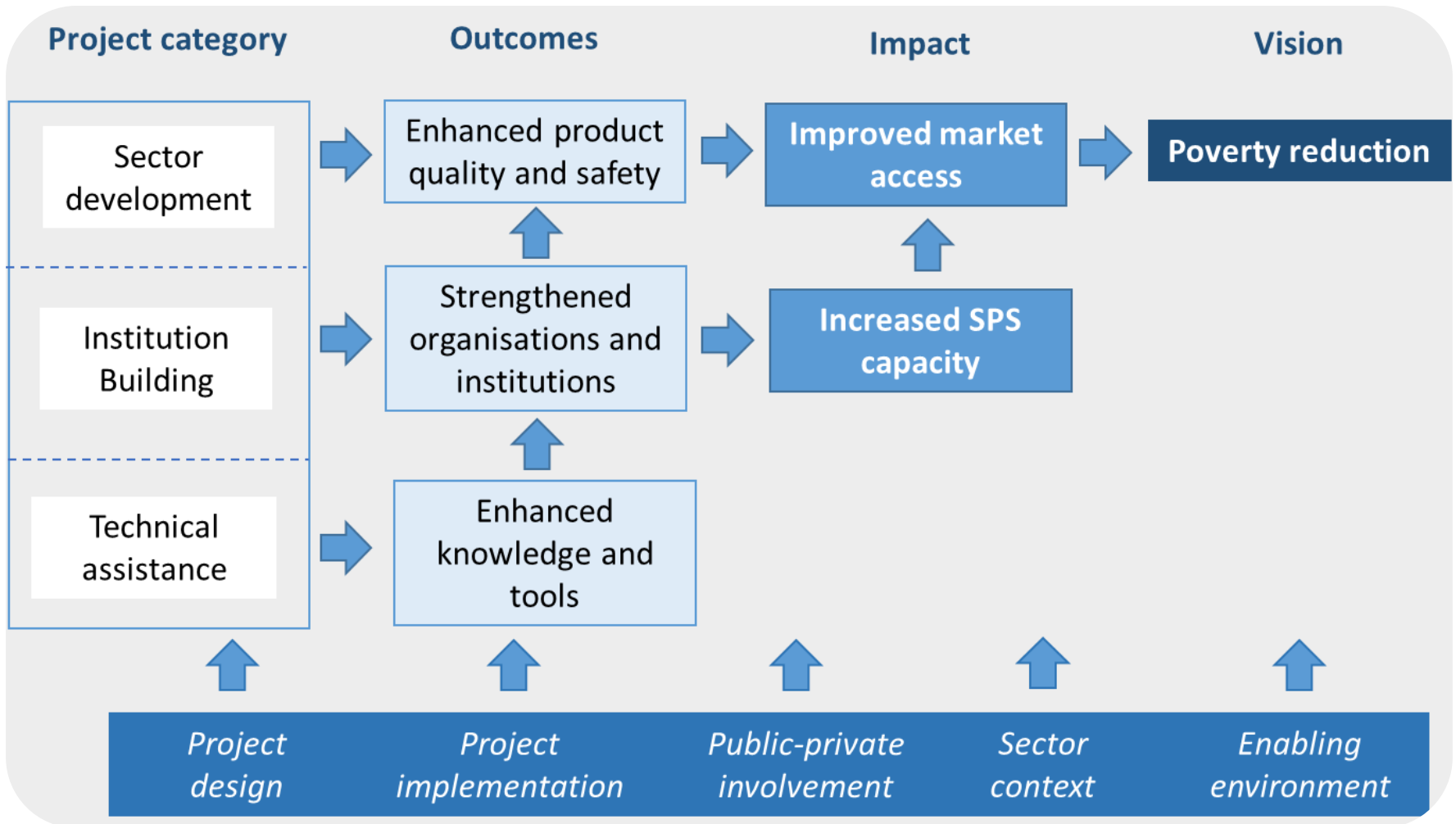
Background

- Objective:
 - Provide an independent assessment of the performance of STDF projects aimed at improving the quality and performance of future STDF projects
- Meta-evaluation:
 - Based on an in-depth review and analysis of individual project evaluation reports
 - Structured methodology (Appendix 3)
- Standardized approach of STDF's projects and evaluations greatly facilitates meta-analysis
 - Use of log-frames and OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

Limitations

- STDF focus, rules and procedures evolved over time
 - e.g. gender and the environment in systematic focus since 2015
- Assessment can only be partial
 - Categories and ratings subjective
 - Evaluation reports based on assessment of the authors
 - Small evaluations constrained in terms of data, expertise of the evaluator, budget, and time
 - Learning from the past (last evaluated project ended in 2015) - much may have happened since

Conceptual framework



Meta evaluation process

1. Formulating the review questions

- Terms of reference

2. Identifying and collecting the evidence

- 22 external evaluation reports identified

3. Appraising the quality of the evidence

- Protocol based on UNICEF GEROS*

4. Assessing the STDF projects

- Protocol following OECD/DAC criteria

5. Synthesising findings and lessons learned

- Realist synthesis based on 'theory'

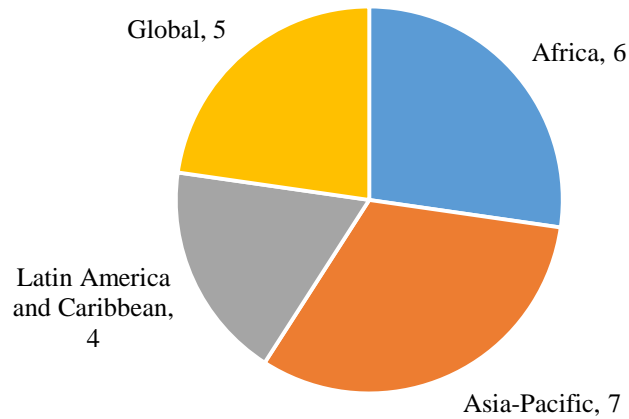
6. Disseminating the findings

- Report presented at WG and on website

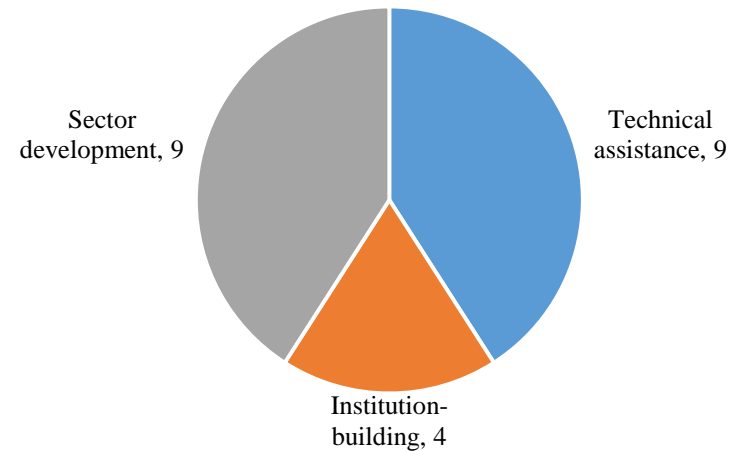
Coverage of evaluation reports included in the meta-evaluation

Total of
22 reports

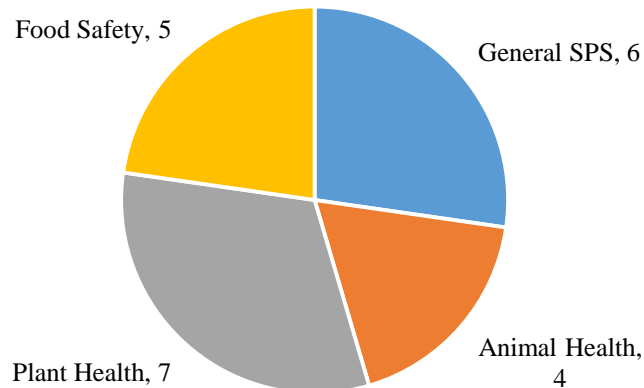
Geographical distribution



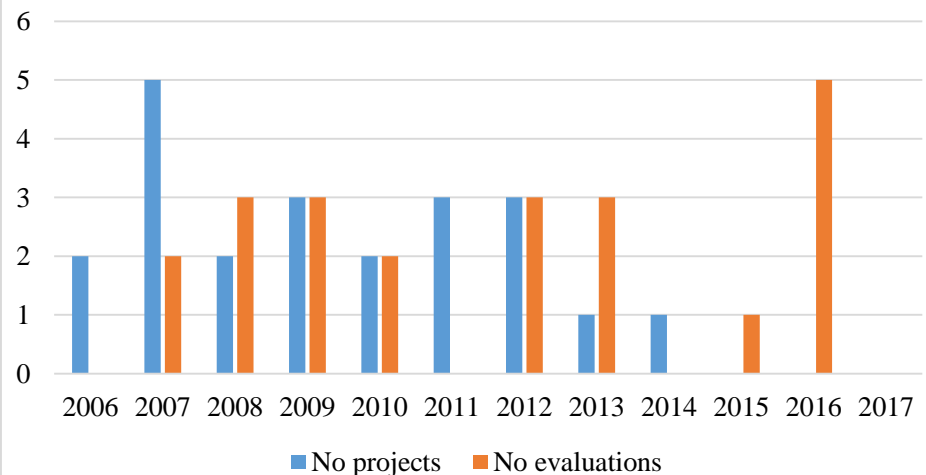
Distribution by project category



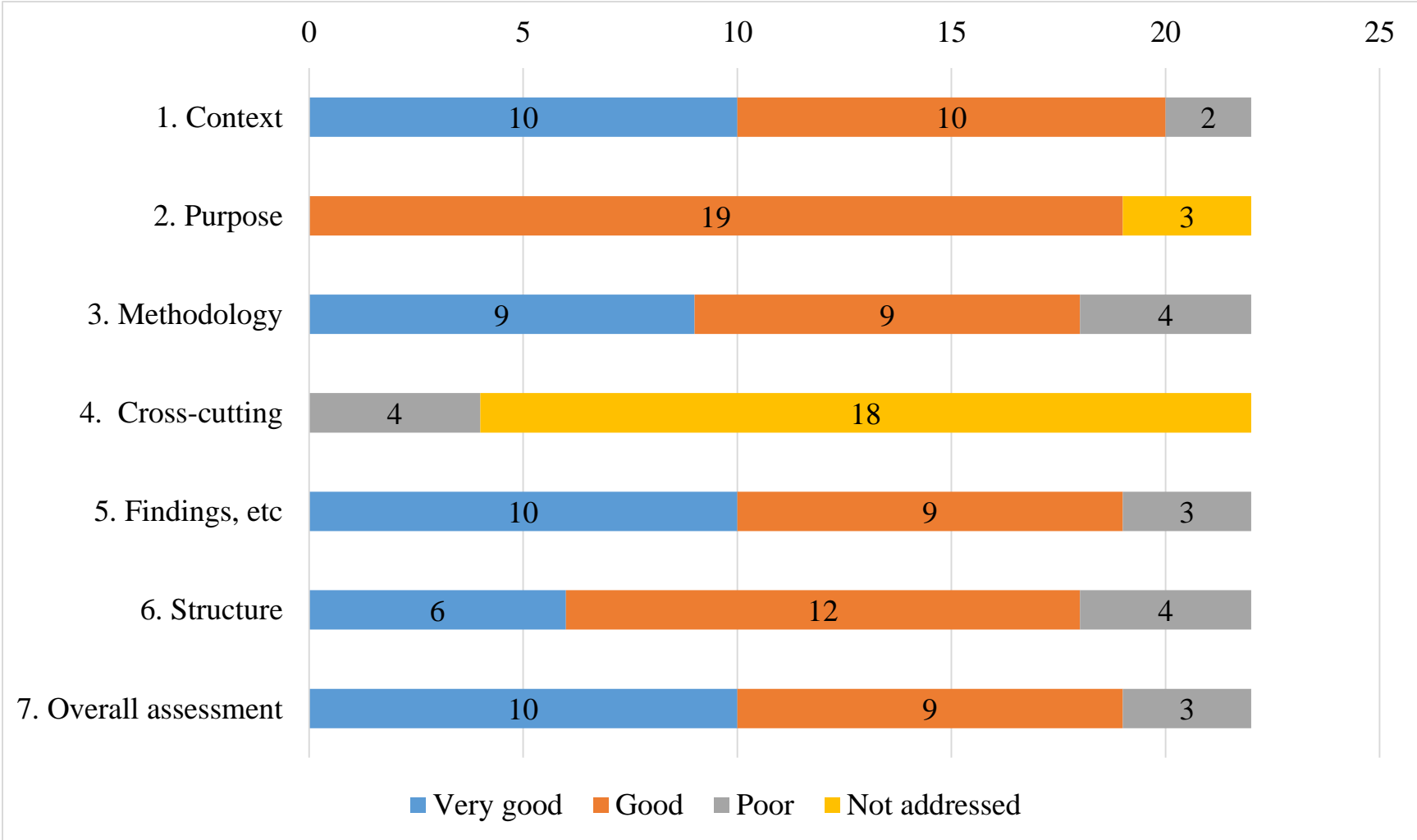
Sector distribution



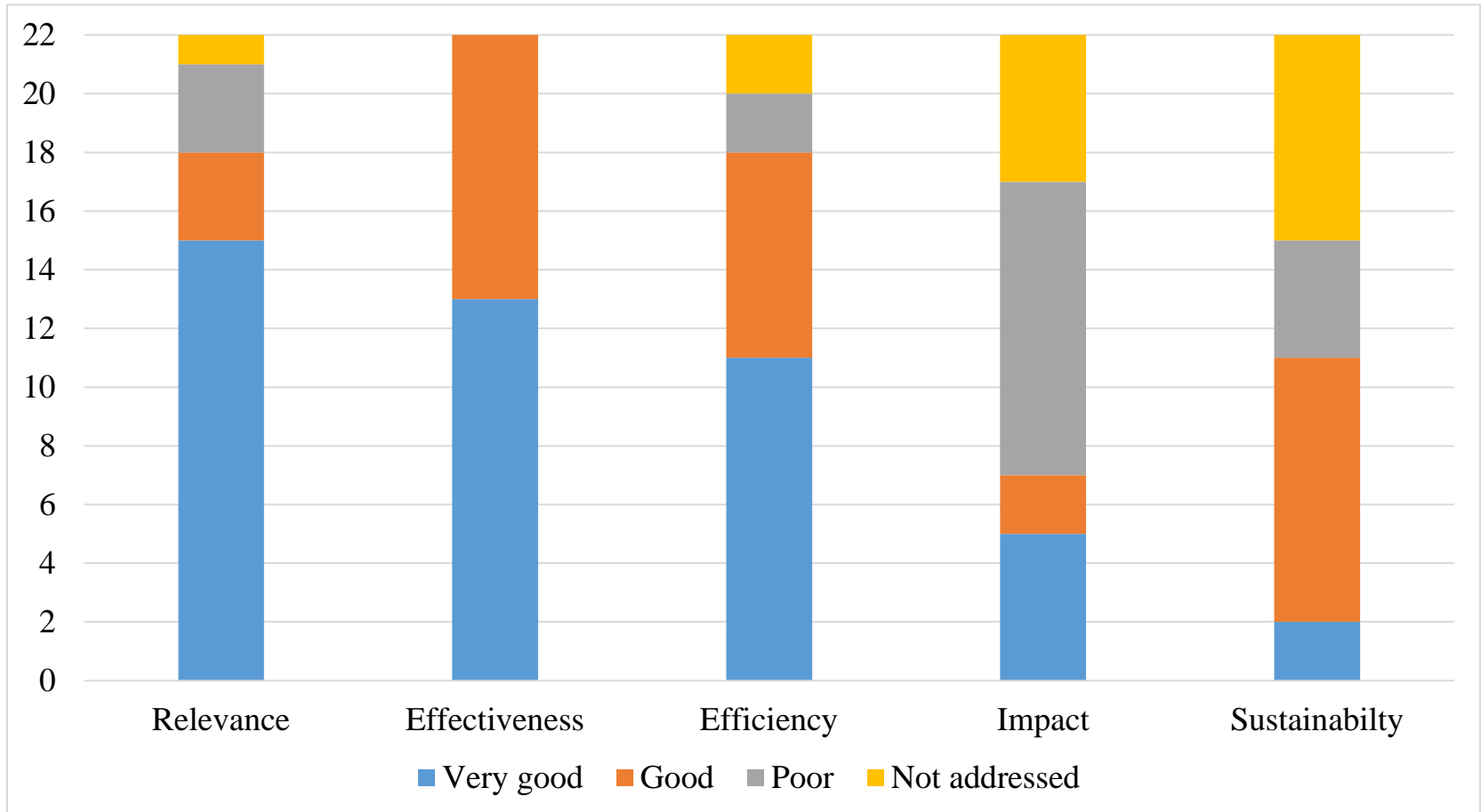
Distribution over time (by end year)



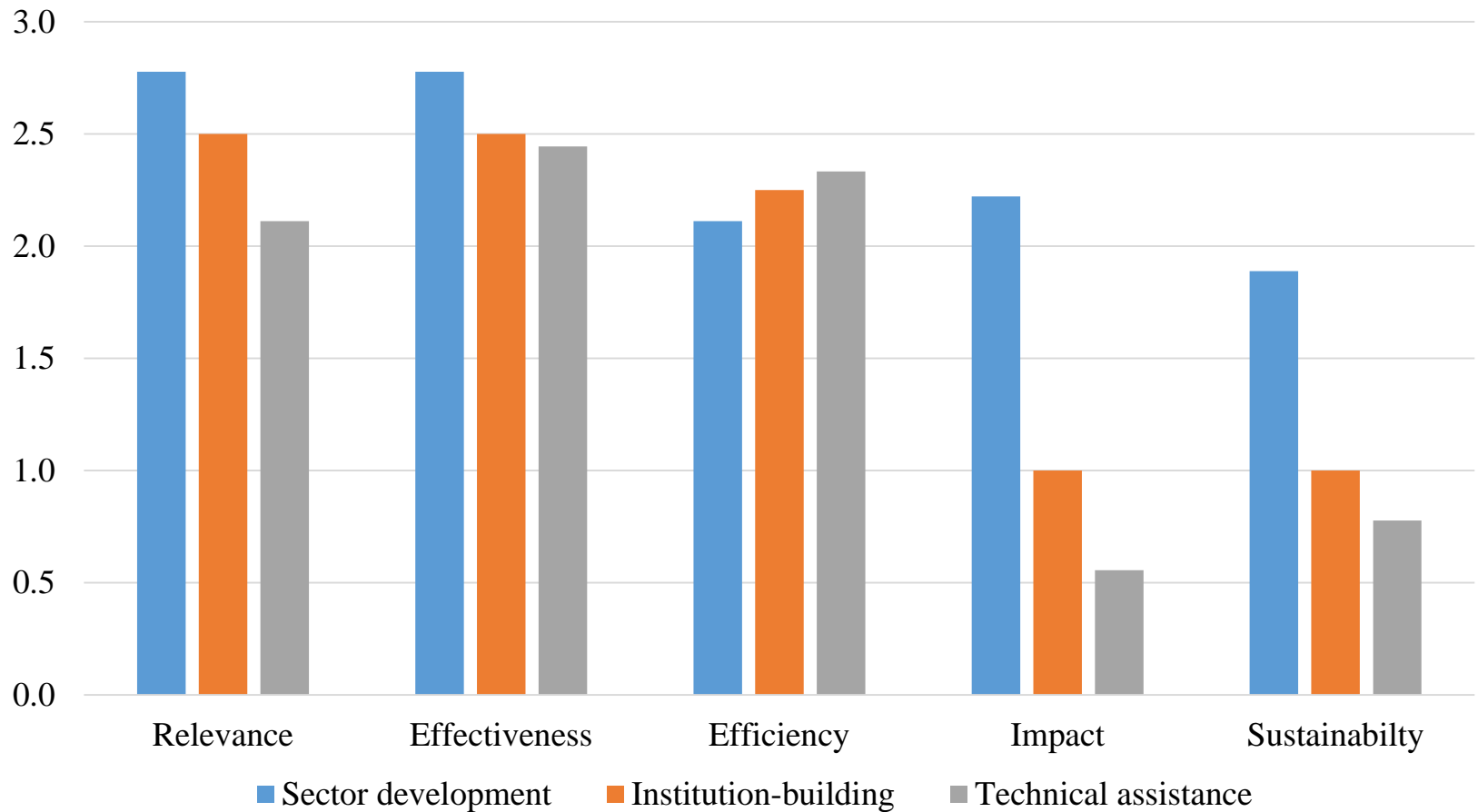
Quality of evaluation reports



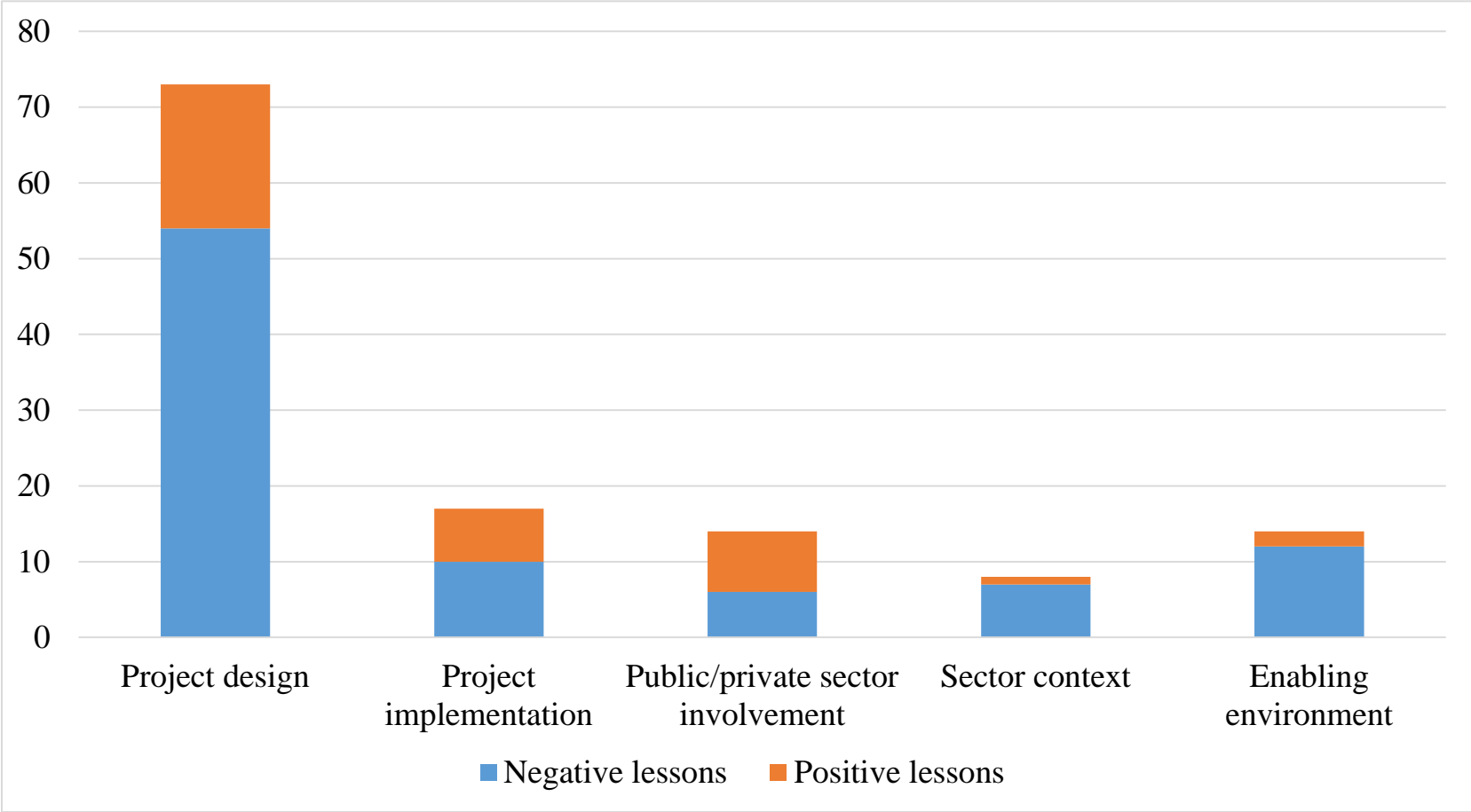
Performance of STDF projects



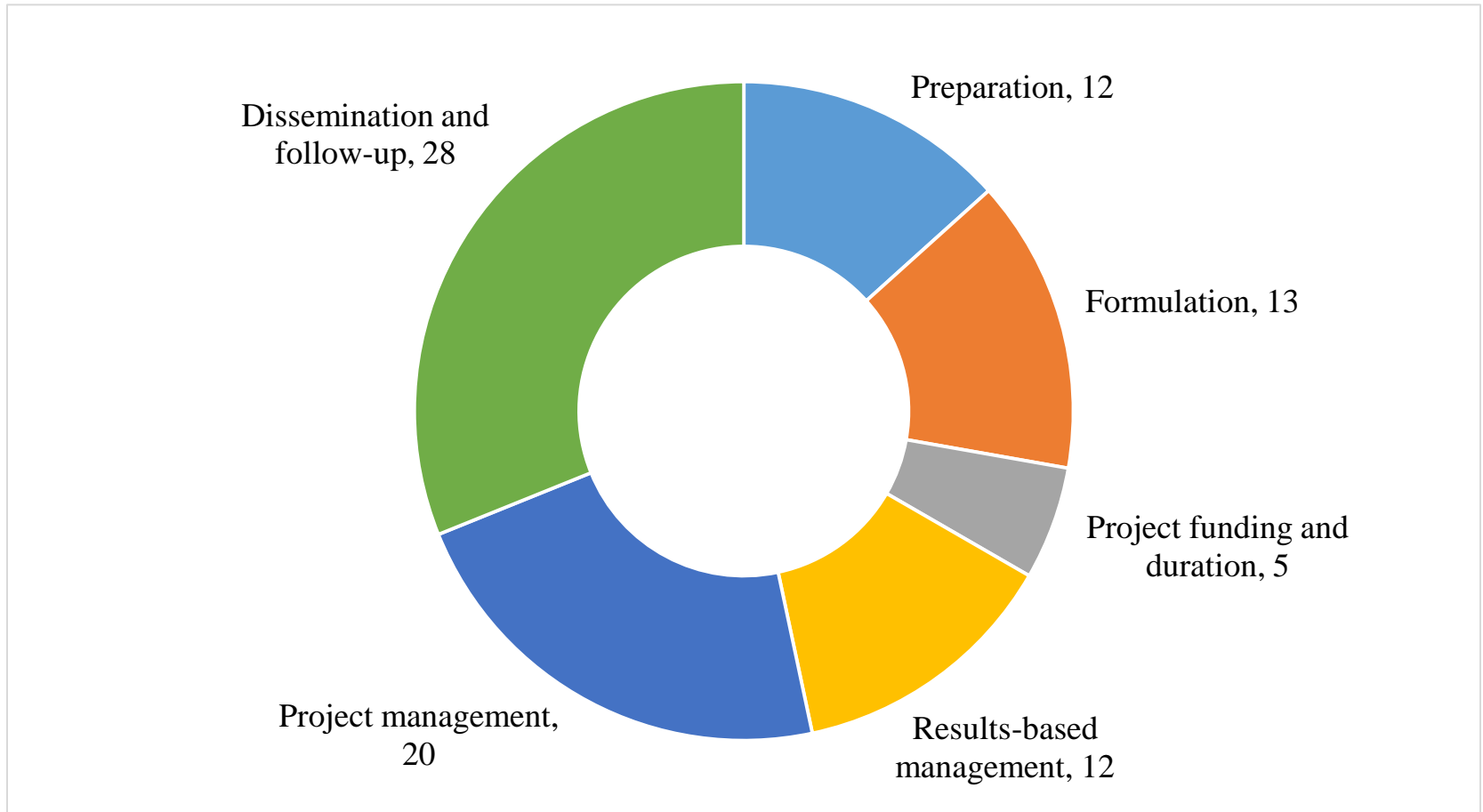
Performance by project category



Lessons learned across enabling conditions



Lessons learned across the project-cycle



Examples of lessons learned across projects

- Understanding local needs, context and planning for sustainability (cattle in Costa Rica, PG/116)
- Securing local ownership (SPS in Cambodia, PG/246)
- Different project designs for different purposes (general)
- Logical framework vital for monitoring and evaluation (mango in Mali, PG/283)
- Importance of competent project management (plant health in Nicaragua, PG/155)
- Need for follow-up and scaling up (fish trade in West Africa, PG/134)
- Private-public collaboration (pest risk management in South-East Asia, PG/328)

Main issues that can be strengthened in projects

- The fundamental need to ground project locally
 - including understanding local contexts and needs, and securing local ownership and participation at all stages of the project;
- The importance of planning for sustainability of results
 - including grounding projects locally, disseminating project results and lessons, and preparing clear phase-out and follow-up strategies; and
- More systematic and focused consideration of gender and the environment
 - within the context of broader socio-economic considerations and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations

Quality of evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply STDF evaluation guidelines• Consider profile of consultants for external evaluations• Use theory-based approaches
Timing and coverage of evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus evaluations on projects of interest• Avoid excessive time lags between end-of-projects and evaluations
Project quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay attention to local contexts and adapt project implementation to changing circumstances• Consider dissemination, phasing out and follow-up firmly in project design
Development focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better integrate aspects of poverty, gender, environment into project design and implementation
Lessons-learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deepen analysis and dissemination of lessons-learned and good practice from STDF projects