

# Results and lessons from STDF Projects: A Meta-Evaluation

STDF Working Group

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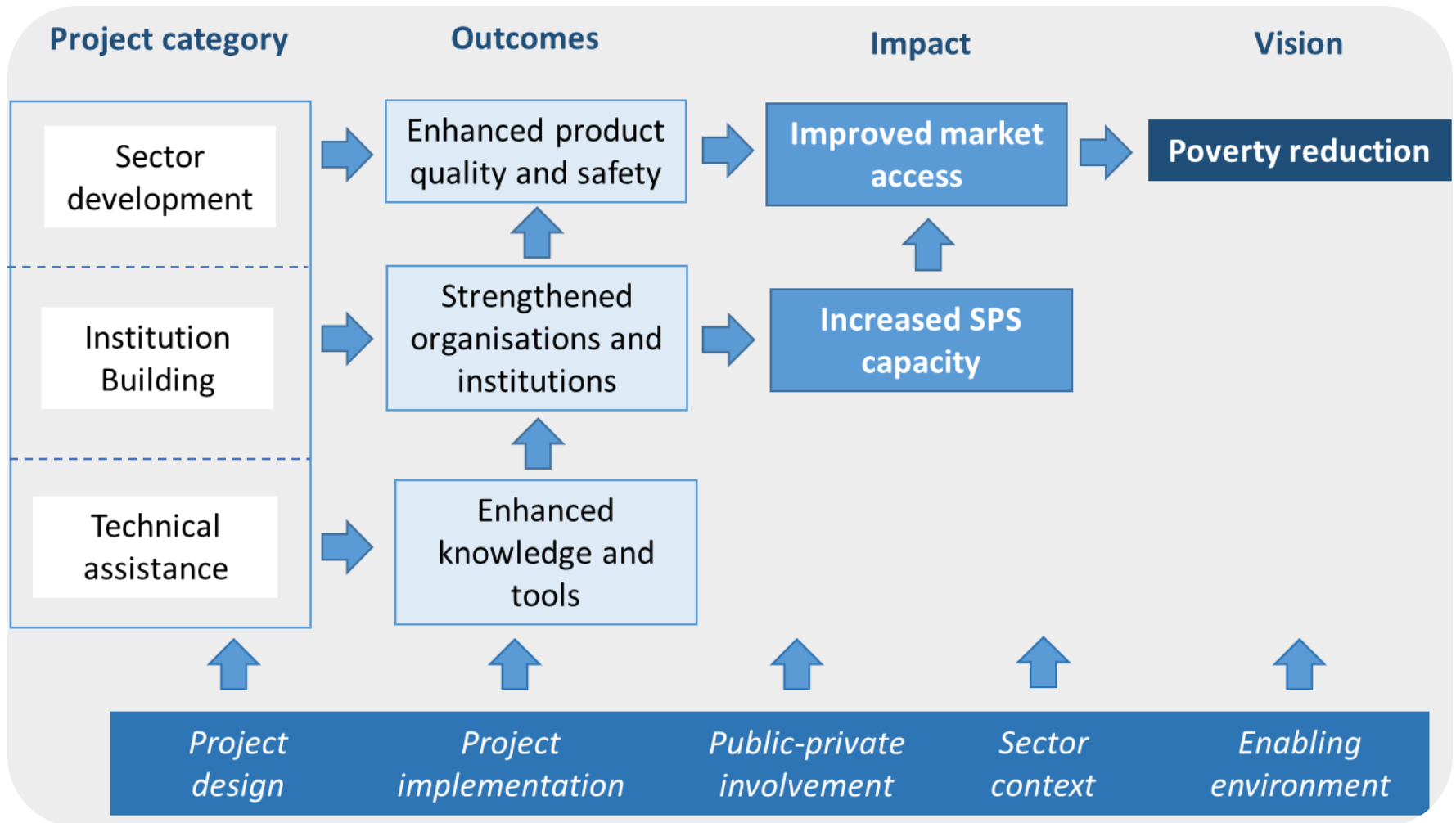
# Background

- 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'

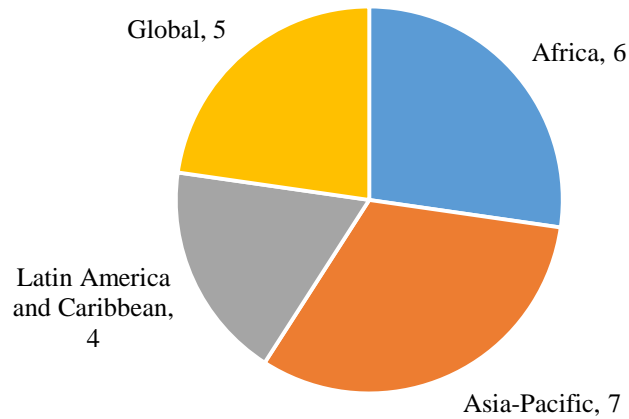
6. Disseminating the findings

- Report presented at WG and on website

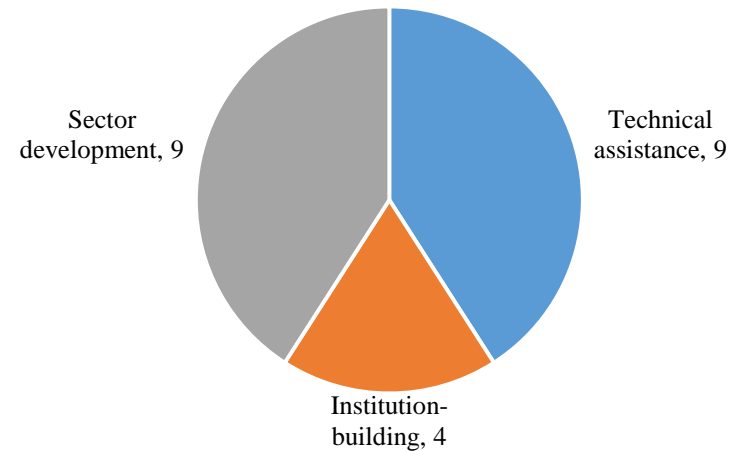
# Coverage of evaluation reports included in the meta-evaluation

Total of  
22 reports

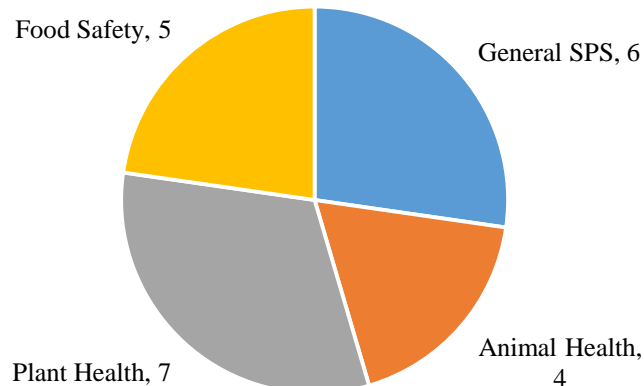
### Geographical distribution



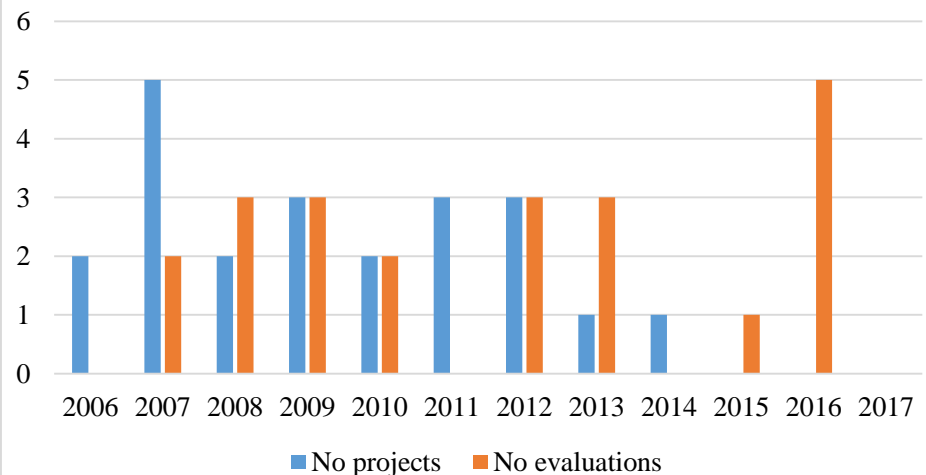
### Distribution by project category



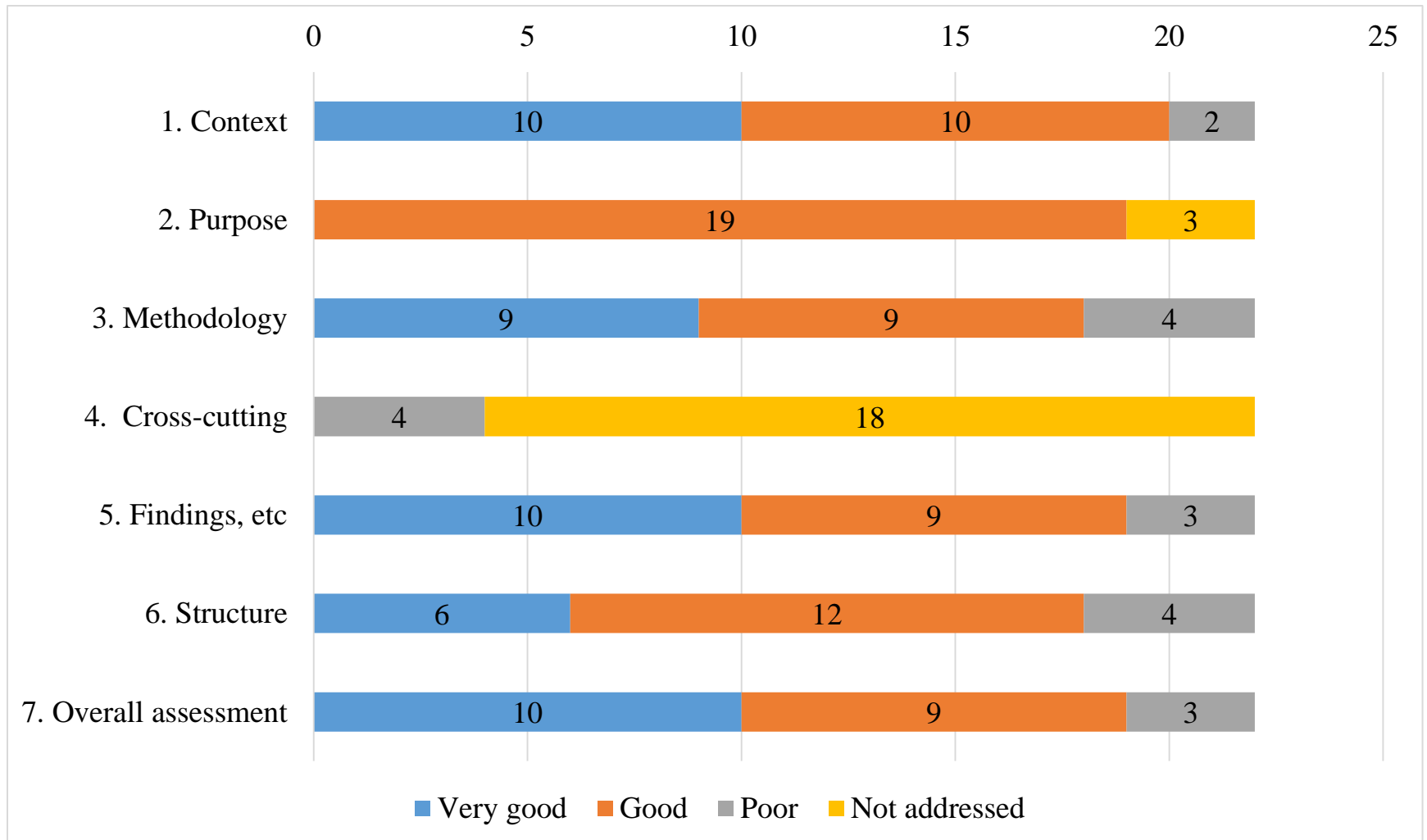
### Sector distribution



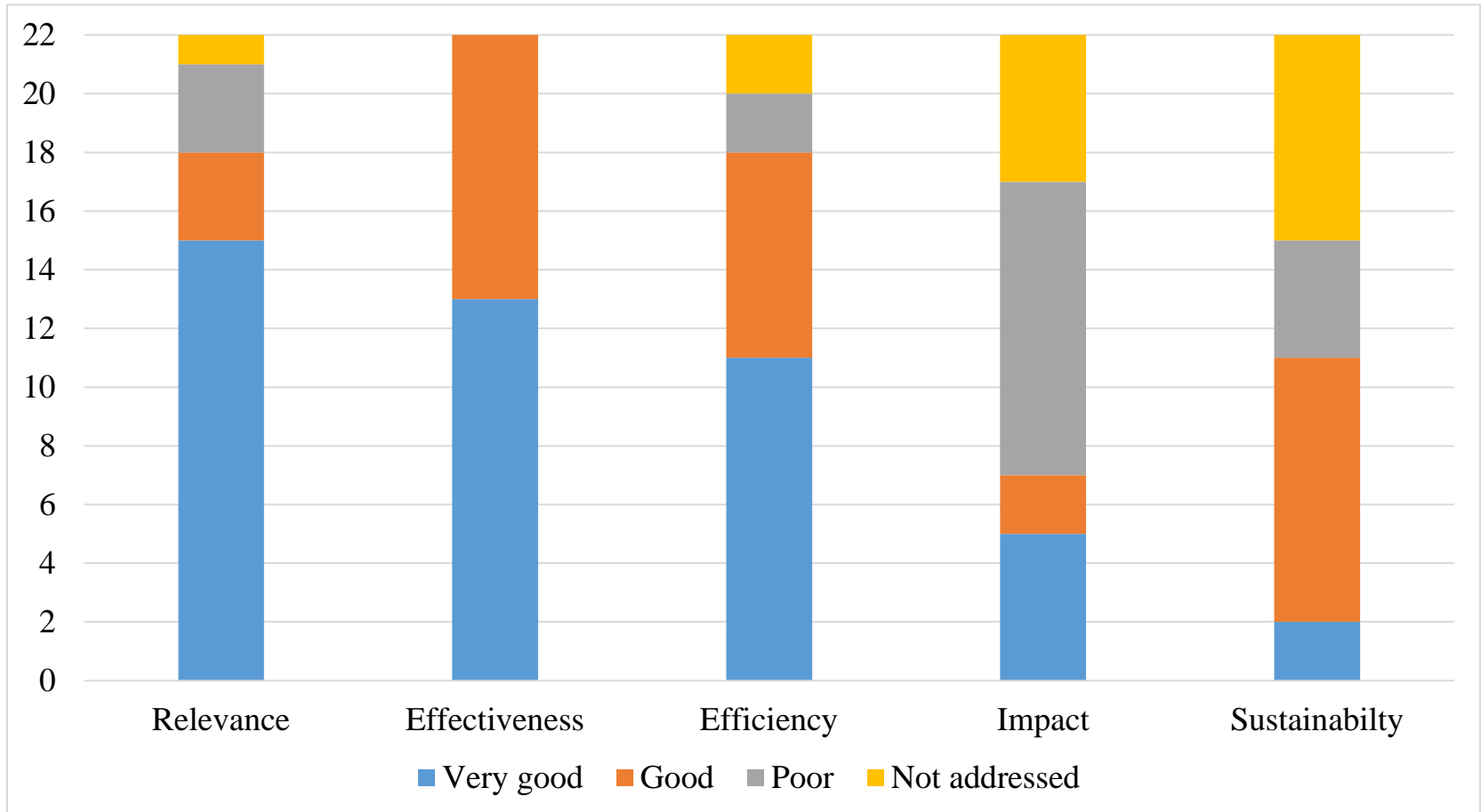
### Distribution over time (by end year)



# Quality of evaluation reports

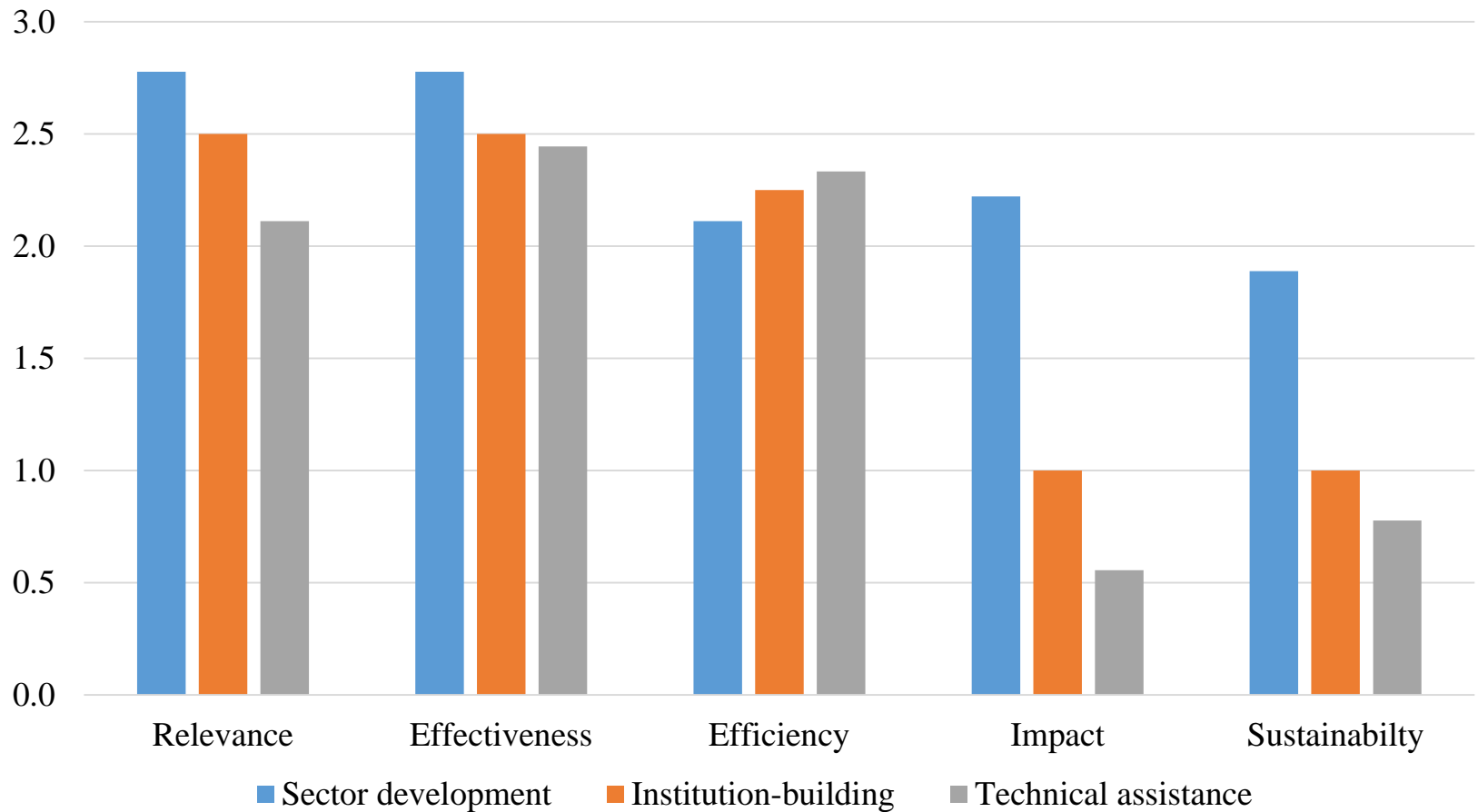


# Performance of STDF projects

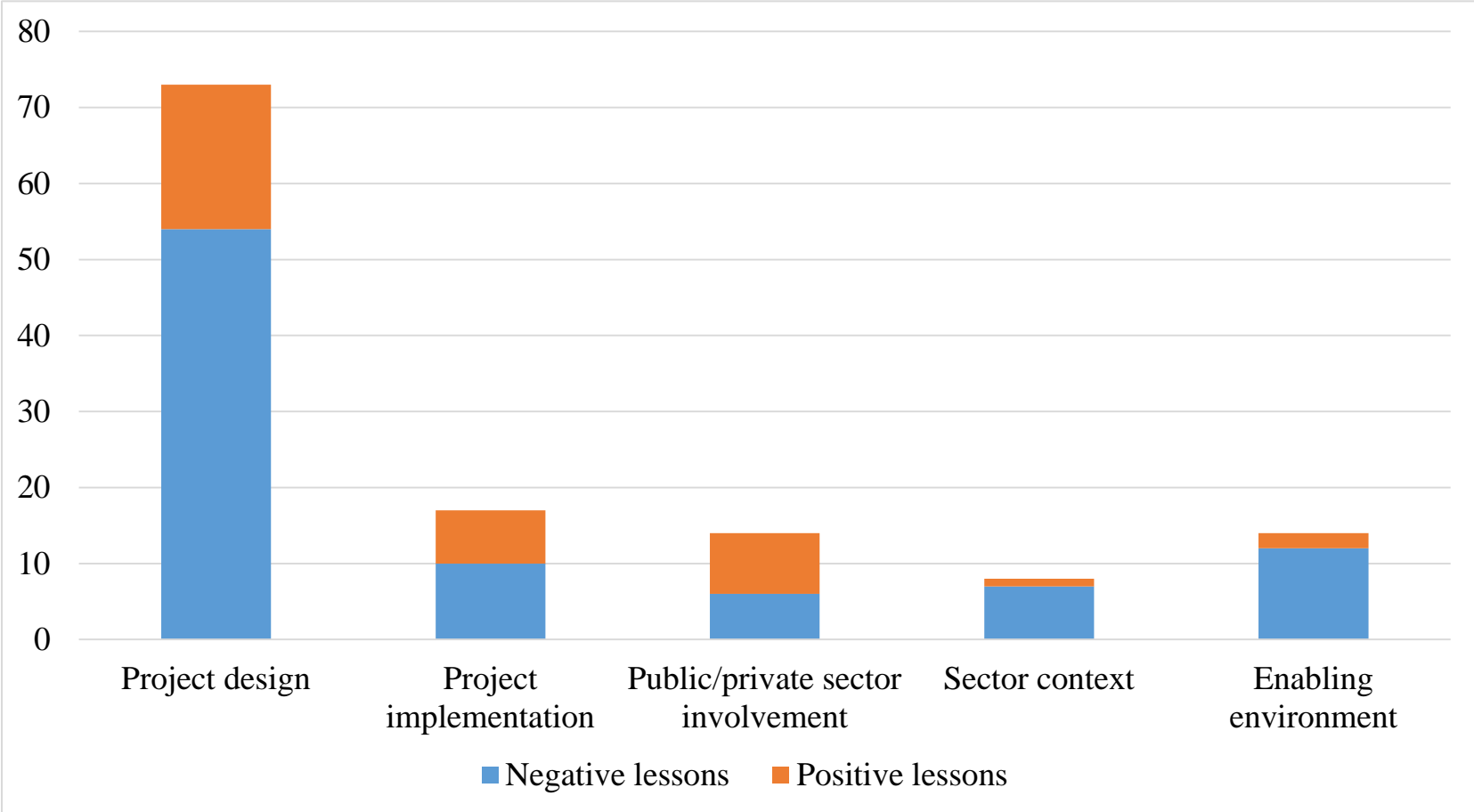




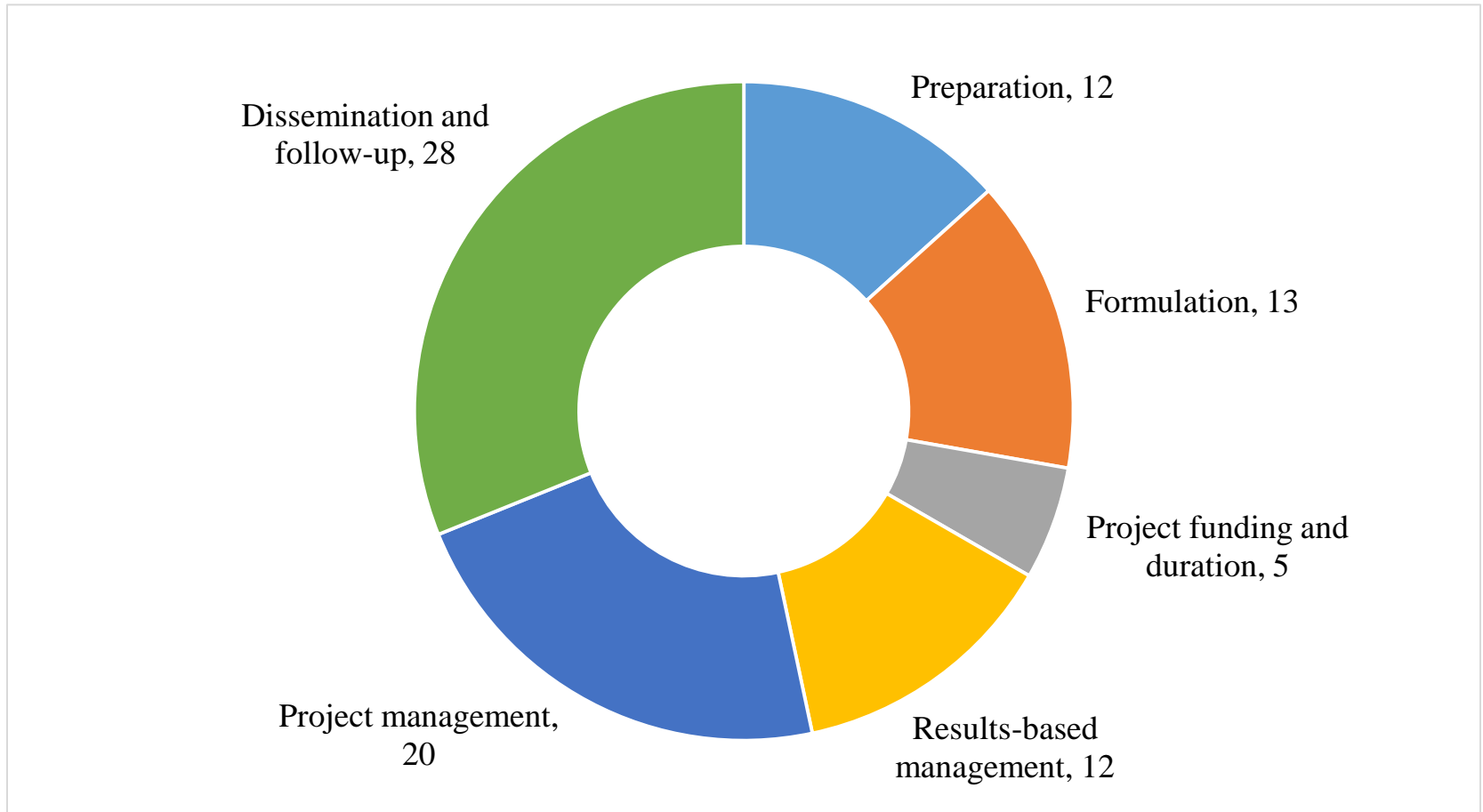
# Performance by project category



# 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

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